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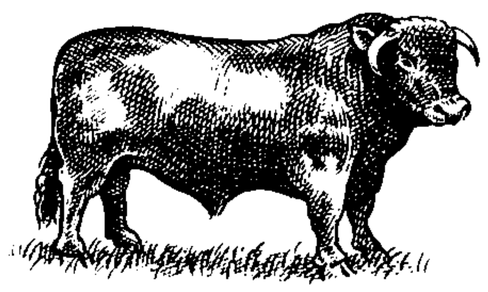

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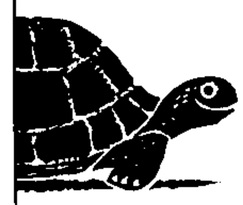

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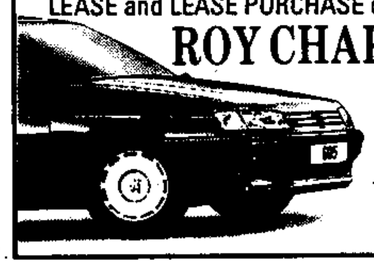

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How long will this campaign of vilification continue? When I was first appointed my critics claimed I had "no creative ability". Yet when my fiscal accounts prove that this is untrue, they still complain. What is one to do in this petty, mean-minded little country?

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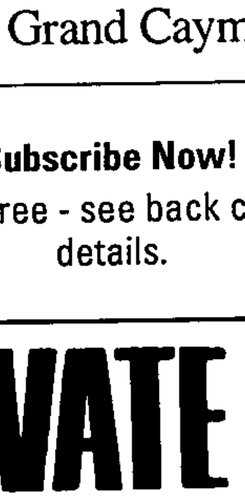
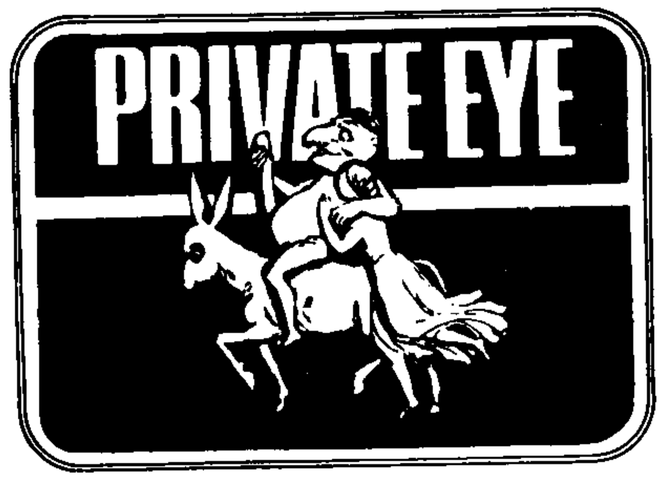


PRIVATE EYE'S
Bore of the Year Awards 1993
will be shown on Saturday March 20th on BBC2 (see press for details).



COLOUR SECTION

A TREMENDOUS rearguard action is being fought at the ministry of defence to protect senior civil servants from the Gulf war ship-chartering scandal (see last *Eye*).

The ministry is peddling the "rotten apple" defence so favoured by police forces when a scandal is exposed. "Rotten apples" are already being singled out as scapegoats for the curious fact that in this country's finest and most patriotic hour, the 1990-91 Gulf war, the enormous majority of ships chartered by the MoD came from Denmark and Germany, while patriotic British shippers, desperate for a slice of the action, were left to cruise about the Mediterranean with hardly a decent contract.

First of the "rotten apples" to be singled out for government action is EC Transport of Poole, Dorset, which in December was suddenly banned by the home office from carrying arms in its ships. The ban was signed personally by the home secretary, Kenneth Clarke; the official explanation being that EC Transport had disqualified itself by its conviction in the "Ordtech trial" (reported almost exclusively in the *Eye*).

At that trial a number of businessmen were convicted of breaking the Iraq arms embargo and rapped firmly on the knuckles with an assortment of suspended sentences and fines. EC Transport's shipping director, Colin Phillips, admitted responsibility for sending a consignment of arms-making equipment to Iraq, passed to him by another company which had lost its nerve.

EC Transport has a chequered history. In 1986, the firm and another director, Ian Rycroft, were found guilty of health and safety offences after shipping explosives, including gunpowder, from Poole to Cherbourg. The following year, when the Herald of Free Enterprise ferry capsized at Zeebrugge, there was considerable panic when the company revealed that it had stored a cargo of dangerous chemicals on the ferry — in clear breach of the regulations.

The firm's desperate protests of innocence ring a little hollow, but the ministry's hope that a few firms like EC Transport will take the brunt of the blame for the Gulf chartering scandal is unlikely to be fulfilled. For a start, it is rather obvious that the reason for Clarke's ban on EC Transport has nothing to do with the Ordtech conviction, which was many long months before the ban. Much more probably, the ban was connected with the report from the ministry of defence police which was sent to the crown prosecution service only a few days before the ban.

The persecution of a few "rotten apples" will not distract attention from the real centre of the chartering scandal: the relationship between the MoD and the government freight agency Hogg Robinson, which has a monopoly on all government military shipping contracts. The consistent movement to and fro of executives of the firm to the ministry, and, more importantly, vice versa, is unlikely to go unnoticed.

The ministry's main hope is delay. Its police have been "investigating" the scandal for years and years without coming to any conclusion. The renewed flurry of activity following a public accounts committee report in 1988 (long before the Gulf war) that all was not well with MoD shipping died the usual quiet death. The man in the ministry whom most suspect of being at the centre of the scandal — Lt Col Douglas Harding — is dead. And the auditor and comptroller general, Sir John Bourn, who is carrying out an inquiry, is himself a former MoD boss. Surely, hope the ministry boffins, the whole nasty business will fade away.

But Colin Phillips is unlikely to go quietly. He deploys what is now known as the "Matrix Churchill defence" — namely that anything he did was encouraged by a greedy and cynical government. He has asked for a judicial review of the ban, which was due to open on 9 March. In his case at the high court he will not pull his punches, as he did in the Ordtech case. Encouraged by the Matrix Churchill judgment, he may even reveal that when he and his fellow-defendants at Reading threatened to subpoena government documents about arms for Iraq, the pliable prosecution quickly collapsed and did a deal. Phillips was fined £1,000. Next time, in the high court, he may not be so susceptible to deals. Another Matrix Churchill looms.

WORKERS at the collapsed Leyland Daf van works in Birmingham are not the only ones living in fear of the auditors who are combing the firm's books.

Senior executives are also shaking in their boots over a strange web of leasing companies that controlled the bosses' leased company cars.

Receivers Arthur Andersen have already been baffled by the huge number of plush limos and the peculiar ways they have been financed. Multiple leases on cars to companies controlled by the friends of senior managers are said to be just the tip of the iceberg.

The result has been a sudden emptying of the company car park as executives hide their vehicles in surrounding streets for fear of a sudden swoop. What can it all mean?

SO COMMON is it for road construction projects to be late that the department of transport has created a bold precedent: it is offering a bonus on a road contract if it finishes on time.

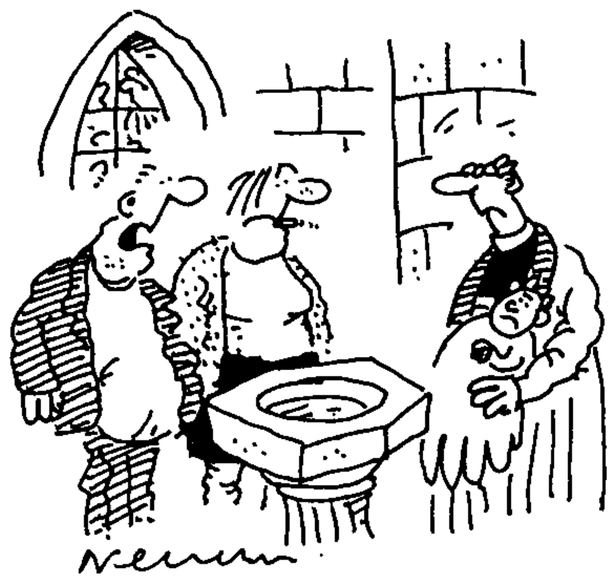
The lucky contractor is just finishing off a routine and minor £500,000 resurfacing job on the A646 in Lancashire. The department is not disclosing the size of the bonus, so generously charged to the tax payer, but can anyone guess the name of the lucky contractor?

Right again. Lucky old Tarmac...

NOT EVERYONE who works for Shell was entirely sad about the sacking of former Channel tunnel personnel director Tom Cain.

He was well known in both companies for his ability to sack people, for which he was rewarded by being made chairman of Shell's prestigious staff sports club at Teddington.

On 25 February, he managed to sack five departmental managers with the usual hand-over-your-car-keys-and-clear-your-desk-immediately treatment, known as the mark of Cain, which has now been passed on to Cain himself.



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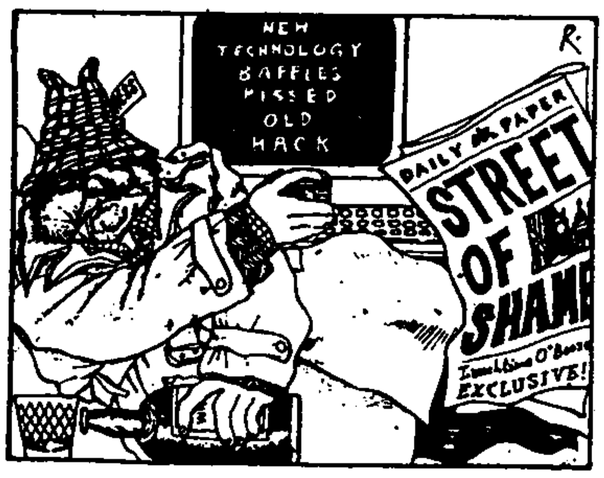


THE prime minister's libel suits against the *New Statesman* and *Scallywag* may come to court as early as June. While much has been written about the likelihood that the *Staggers* will close if the verdict goes against it, far less attention has been paid to the financial state of *Scallywag*.

Perhaps this is because the magazine is universally assumed to be a shoe-string operation run by an undischarged bankrupt (Simon Regan, a bibulous ex-*News of the Screws* hack) and therefore has nothing to lose. Regan encourages this idea, boasting that *Scallywag* is "published by the inebriated, the gifted and insane." But it is untrue.

The *Eye* can reveal that *Scallywag* is in fact owned by none other than David Sullivan, the millionaire pornographer and sex-shop tycoon.

The clue lies in a small line at the foot of the magazine's title page: "*Scallywag* is printed and published in its entirety by WWR Publications Ltd, PO Box No 2925, London NW3 5DO." Documents at Companies House reveal that the majority shareholder in WWR Publications — whose full address is 65 Roderick Road, NW3 — is Sport Newspapers Ltd, the company which owns the *Daily* and *Sunday Sport*. Half the shares in Sport Newspapers Ltd belong to David Sullivan, and the other half to David and Ralph Gold, two long-standing partners of Sullivan who own a string of businesses in the "sex industry".

In the year ending 31 August 1991, Sport Newspapers Ltd made a pre-tax profit of just over £2 million on a turnover of £18,885,000 — very far from the shoestring level. If John Major is awarded huge damages and costs against *Scallywag*, and the magazine pleads poverty, perhaps he should demand the dosh from Messrs Sullivan and Gold.

David Sullivan is, incidentally, no stranger to the courts. In 1982 he was jailed for living off immoral earnings. This gives a certain piquancy to the article in the new issue of *Scallywag* which claims that "we genuinely care for the little people... we go for the crooks and charlatans."

PS: The latest *Scallywag* also carries an editorial by Simon Regan railing against the English *libel law*. "We have always had scant regard for the libel system and think it is wildly unfair, complicated beyond measure, hopelessly outdated and cripplingly expensive." How odd, then, to learn that Regan has himself now issued a libel writ against the *Grauniad*, after it suggested that he was a "lunatic" whose reporting methods left much to be desired. In his *Scallywag* article, Regan proposes that anyone being threatened with a libel writ should write to the litigant "Dear Sir, Piss off." Perhaps the *Guardian* should try it.

SIR GORDON BORRIE writes to the *Eye* to say he was indeed at the Mirror Group Newspapers board meeting on 17 February, when the *Eye* had him absent.

We apologise for the mistake. But Sir Gordon's complaint that the false information damaged his reputation is puzzling. The *Eye* was inclined to believe the false story not because it did Sir Gordon damage but because it let him off the hook. Now we know that Sir Gordon was at the meeting, we also know that he supports the MGN chief executive David Montgomery in his refusal to recognise trade unions and his consistent replacement of good journalists by bad ones.

Sir Gordon is a member of the Labour party and chairman of the party's prestigious new committee on social injustice. He is studying a large number of cases of social injustice sent to him by the National Union of Journalists for which his own company is responsible.

FORMER *Mirror* political editor Alastair Campbell is clearly needled by his reputation as a Labour party propagandist. To prove how unfair it is, in his first column for *Today* last week he urged Labour supporters to vote Liberal Democrat in the Newbury by-election in order to defeat the Tory candidate.

This sudden enthusiasm for Lib-Lab tactical voting will come as a surprise to any readers who recall a column Campbell wrote in the *Daily Mirror* on 12 November last year. "So," he wrote then, "Labour's relations with the Liberal Democrats have taken a turn for the worse, have they? About bloody time. And about time Labour set about the task of pulverising the Lib-Dems into a political force as irrelevant as the Greens or the Loonies."

How this task will be achieved by voting for the Lib-Dems is a mystery only Campbell can explain.

THE *Grauniad*'s much-blurbed 16-page "guide" to northern France was deeply entwined with the interests of Brittany Ferries, who offered free holidays to readers and lots of advertising to the *Graun*.

There was one problem: Brittany Ferries do not service all the ports in the area. So Dieppe and Boulogne (served by rival ferry companies) were literally wiped off the map, which appears with blank spaces where France's two ancient and popular ports should be.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

IF SHE were not real, City hack Judi Bevan might be mistaken for a character in her own finance-and-fucking novel, *The Insiders*.

When she married *Sunday Torygraph* city editor John Jay (who is ten years her junior) last November, the best man was her former lover, the multi-millionaire property magnate Elliot Bernard.

Bernard is famous for lending flats to David Mellor, and his best friend Roger Seelig, of Guinness fame, wrote a glowing review of Bevan's book in the *Spectator*.

"Do you mind if we avoid Britain — it's getting so violent there!"

THE ATMOSPHERE at the *Observer* office in Battersea is reminiscent of the last days of a crumbling dictatorship. Although both Donald Trelford and Lonrho insist the newspaper is not for sale, few believe it will survive the year without a change of owner.

There are three possible buyers: the *Independent*, which is said to have raised a bank facility in preparation for a bid and would buy the paper merely to close it down and leave the field free for the *Sindy*; the *Financial Times*, on whose presses the *Observer* is already printed; and the *Grauniad*, which is thought to be willing to spend up to £30 million to acquire the ailing title.

If any of these papers acquires the *Observer*, Donald Trelford will be removed forthwith, as will any hacks who are too closely associated with his tottering regime. Hence the increasing reluctance of *Observer* hacks to please Trelford by filling the paper with propaganda pieces for Lonrho.

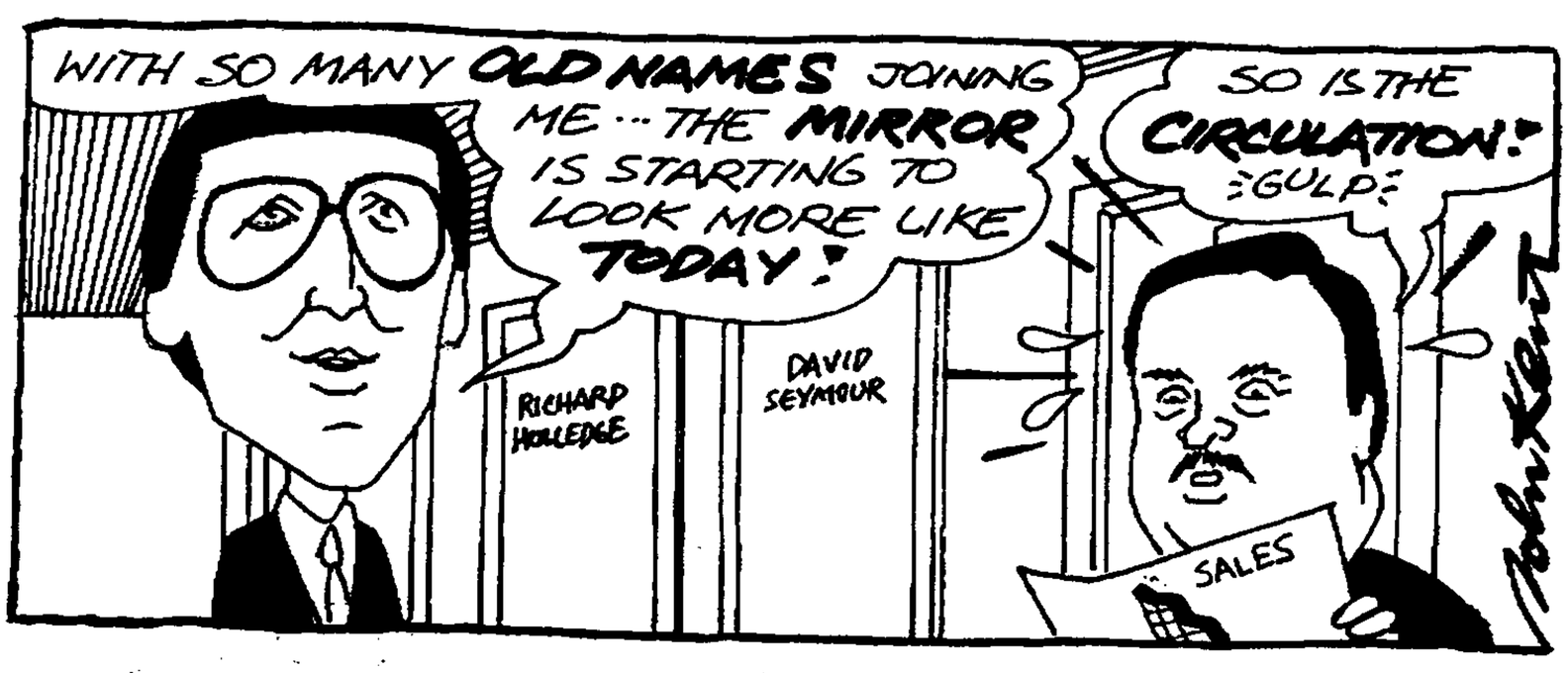
Still, there is one hack left who is willing to do this dirty work — David Harrison, a staffer who two weeks ago wrote a shameless puff piece for Renamo, the ruthless South African-backed terrorist movement in Mozambique. By amazing coincidence, Lonrho has valuable interests in Mozambique and would like to keep Renamo sweet; by equally amazing coincidence, the leader of Renamo lunched in the *Observer*'s boardroom shortly before the piece appeared.

Harrison has further enraged his colleagues by his habit of "byline grabbing". When the Brer oil tanker ran aground off the Shetlands earlier this year, the *Observer's* Scottish correspondent, Callum MacRae, sent a long on-the-spot report. Mysteriously, this appeared in the paper under the name of... David Harrison.

There was a similar incident the weekend before last, when *Observer* hack Peter Beaumont was asked to cover an IRA bomb explosion in Camden Town. On returning to the office on Saturday evening, he saw a proof of the front page and discovered that his story had David Harrison's name on it.

Beaumont, who is also the *Observer's* religious affairs correspondent, promptly rolled up his sleeves and whacked Harrison with a right upper-cut. A tremendous punch-up ensued, during which newsroom chairs and desk-lamps were sent flying. An innocent bystander who tried to intercede, fine arts correspondent Martin Bailey, emerged from the fray with a cracked rib. Foreign correspondent Shyam Bhatia, who had just returned from reporting on Saddam Hussein's ruthless extermination of the marsh Arabs, said he had never seen such violence. Finally the two combatants were pulled apart by Hugh McIlvanney, the paper's legendary boxing writer. "If I'd known it was about bylines," he growled afterwards, "I'd have stopped the fight on aesthetic grounds."

Pixie Trelford, who witnessed the fight but wisely kept his distance, told the brawling hacks that "if you're going to behave like schoolboys I'll treat you like schoolboys", and ruled that neither of them could have his name on the bomb story. It was thus printed under the anonymous rubric: "By staff reporters."


Rommet
WITH SO MANY OLD NAMES JOINING ME ... THE MIRROR IS STARTING TO LOOK MORE LIKE TODAY!
SO IS THE CIRCULATION! :GULP:
RICHARD HOLEDGE
DAVID SEYMOUR
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DONALD TRELFORD, editor and chief executive of the *Observer*, has been left with huge quantities of egg on his face following a recent libel case heard in the high court.

The plaintiff was Hamid Jafar, the Iraqi-born owner of Crescent Petroleum, who worked closely *with Saddam* Hussein's government until the imposition of UN sanctions in August 1990. The defendant was Alan George, a freelance journalist who has written for the *Observer* about Middle Eastern affairs for many years.

The *casus belli* was an article by George last June, which revealed that during the 1980s Crescent developed "intimate relations" with Iraq, setting up an ambitious joint venture with Baghdad's ministry of industry and military industrialisation. It added that Hamid Jafar's brother, one Jafar Jafar, was in charge of Iraq's atom bomb programme.

Although the piece was not published in the *Observer* it did appear, via the newspaper's syndication service, in the *Calgary Herald* in Canada. Hamid Jafar promptly sued both Alan George and the *Observer*, claiming the article implied his company was in some way owned or controlled by Saddam Hussein's government.

At first, the *Observer* seemed inclined to defend the case. But after only a few weeks Trelford capitulated. Last September he paid £5,000 to a charity of Jafar's choice, and sent the oilman a grovelling letter apologising for the story and undertaking never again to publish "this or any similar article concerning Crescent or you".

What made this capitulation rather unusual was that Alan George, the *Observer's* co-defendant, had not been consulted about it — still less included in it. He was left by Trelford to fight on alone, financing his own defence. It was an intimidating prospect: George is a freelance journalist, whereas Crescent Petroleum is a $700 million corporation. Nevertheless, he had a good case. His article had *not* suggested that Crescent was a front-company for the Iraqi government; indeed it had quoted Jafar's solicitors, Clifford Chance, as confirming that Jafar "owns Crescent in his own right and not on behalf of any other interest... in particular the Iraqi government." He applied to have the case struck out on the grounds that the article was not capable of bearing the meaning complained of by Jafar.

The case reached the high court on the Thursday before last. George's counsel, Tom Shields, argued that readers of the article could not infer that Crescent was an Iraqi front unless they disbelieved the word of Messrs Clifford Chance — an unthinkable prospect. (In their capacity as Jafar's solicitors, representatives of Clifford Chance were of course much in evidence in the courtroom.) Mr Justice Drake agreed. After a mere two hours of submissions, he ruled that no reasonable reader would find hidden meanings in the piece — only somebody "avid for scandal". He also held that it was fair to describe Crescent's relations with the Iraqi government as "intimate". The case was dismissed, and costs were awarded to Alan George.

This victory is a huge embarrassment for Trelford, who was so keen to kowtow to an Iraqi tycoon that he betrayed one of his own contributors and apologised for an article which then turned out not to be libellous anyway. Hamid Jafar is a Shi'ite; some *Observer* hacks are now using a similar epithet to describe their editor.

■ FACT: This month is the third anniversary of the execution of *Observer* correspondent Farzad Bazoft by the Iraqi government — the selfsame regime with which Jafar was, at the time, an "intimate" trading partner.

HACKWATCH No 41: Anne Robinson

FOR THE past decade, in between presenting *Points of View* and hosting a show on Radio 2, Anne Robinson has found time to pen a weekly column in the *Daily Mirror*, from whom she received more than £200,000 a year. Now, for a similar fee, she is transferring her allegiance to Rupert Murdoch's *Today*.

When she left the *Mirror* she said she could no longer bear the "fearful atmosphere" under David "Rommel" Montgomery, and that the *Mirror* had lost its heart. It had certainly lost its head where matters of Robinson's salary were concerned.

Back in 1988 when her second husband, John Penrose, left his job as assistant editor of the *Mirror*, La Robinson asked Cap'n Bob for a pay rise as there would no longer be two salaries coming into her household. He blithely doubled her money to £80,000, which rose in value over the next couple of years to £130,000, plus various perks.

During the run-up to the Mirror group's flotation in 1991, Maxwell asked Robinson to present the TV commercials pushing the share offer. Robinson's agent, Mark McCormack, won an annual fee of £60,000, on top of her journalistic earnings, to take part in MGN adverts.

Small wonder that following Maxwell's death, Robinson gushed: "He just enriched my life. He was my inspiration and my hero." When she turned up at the *Mirror* building to announce her departure, she told news editor Steve Lynas: "I'm going to *Today*. There's no point in any of you applying because I've got all the money!"

The Wapping rag was jubilant at hiring such a "star" columnist. "Prepare for forthright views and intelligent comment," it warned its readers last week. Robinson told *Today* she was a non-aligned radical — "which means my opinions are sometimes unpredictable. But they are always passionate."

Some mistake, surely? It is, in fact, all too easy to predict the opinions that will be paraded in her column for *Today*, when it eventually starts: routine slagging off of Charles and Diana; swipes at "the rich"; and whinges about how tough it is for working mums like herself to eke out a living. There will also be an obsessive interest in the female body. Robinson regularly splutters about how unjust it is that women are expected to look good, yet she is forever rebuking women who aren't as glamorous as she is.

For those *Today* readers who can't bear to wait, here is a digest of the unpredictable but passionate comments that have filled her *Mirror* column recently.

11 November: In the United States for the presidential election, Robinson complains that male presenters on American television are allowed to be "old or ugly" whereas their female colleagues are "required to be young, thin as a rake, very beautiful".

18 November: Men are opposed to women's ordination, Robinson suggests, because female priests "are not a very fanciable lot. Not the sort a man would plan to lose sleep over. Or even more precisely wish to sleep with. This may seem a very crude point. But I think it is wholly relevant." Robinson also finds space for a swipe at Charles and Diana for having "opinions". "I am," she declares, "not interested in their views on society's ills, morality, one-parent families, broken homes, tall buildings, the English language..." God forbid that anyone should be equally uninterested in Robinson's own opinions on such subjects.

2 December: Women who try to balance work and family "end up in a cul-de-sac... too exhausted to be ambitious; too poor to stay at home; too burdened to occasionally relax and escape." Robinson, who is not discernibly poor or unambitious, fails to explain how this applies to her.

16 December: Attacks "the very rich", who — unlike "the rest of us" — can afford to go on world cruises. Also delivers another telling-off to the royals. She writes, before disappearing on a long (though discreet and cheap) Christmas holiday: "We need a House of Windsor going about its business with discretion, modesty, constraint — and, please, as cheaply as possible."

13 January: Liz Forgan, Anne Robinson's new boss at BBC Radio, has been described by the *Daily Telegraph* as small and plump. Robinson is outraged at this sexist comment: "You do not suppose, do you, that Ms Forgan's treatment at the hands of the so-called serious press has something to do with her being a woman?" Oddly enough, elsewhere on the page Robinson commits the same offence herself, drawing attention to "Fiona Armstrong's flabby calves". "Women on television need to look as good as is humanly possible," she explains. "The viewer is the customer with a right to an opinion about your legs, your lop-sided smile or the cut of your earrings."

27 January: For a fee of £650, you can now get to choose the sex of your baby. "The trouble is," Robinson comments, "when you restrict a service to certain categories you forget one set of people who always get their way. The rich... they can fly to America, or, by waving lots of money around, persuade doctors they have sound medical reasons to need to choose between a baby boy and baby girl." What Robinson forgets is that she is herself not only rich but a frequent transatlantic flyer: her contract with Maxwell used to allow her half a dozen free Concorde trips to New York every year.

3 February: Disgracefully, a plump woman is again being judged by her appearance. However, the judge in this case is Robinson. Her target is Veronica Bland, who won £15,000 damages for the effects of passive smoking. "Was everyone," Robinson asks, "far too polite last week to mention that Ms Veronica Bland is by anyone's standards fat?" She urges Bland to visit Weight-Watchers.

10 February: Another excitingly original observation on the royals: "It is my belief that people generally regard the Ferguson family as represented by Ron and Sarah as tacky and tiresome." And more sizeism: Robinson advises women who want a successful career to start by losing a stone. "Look good, feel good and you'll have the confidence to be your own person and not worry unreasonably about what others think."

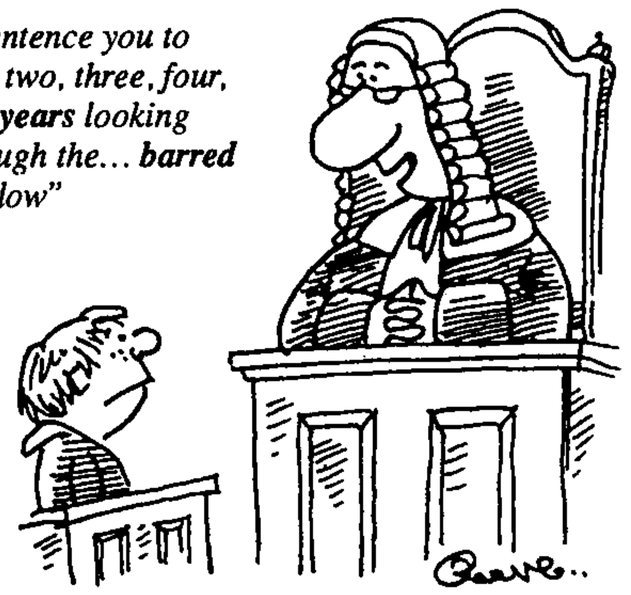
17 February: A momentous occasion: "This column is 10 years old today... What a difference a decade makes. Thank you readers for your tolerance and good humour and for being there."

24 February: "High-earning, accomplished women still unconsciously believe that in a perfect world it is the man who should bring home the major share of the bacon." She does not say whether these women include Anne Robinson.

2 March: Less than a fortnight after her moving tribute to her loyal *Mirror* readers, Anne Robinson announces that she is defecting to *Today*, because she wants to reach "the sort of bright people who read *Today*... *Today*'s readership reflects the mood of the country."

3 March: Forced to work out her notice, Robinson reappears on her usual page in the *Daily Mirror*. By now she seems to be entirely on auto-pilot, issuing a knee-jerk attack on Charles and Diana ("What are we to do about these absurd people?") and rushing to the defence of her employer, John Birt, against those who have criticised his tax-dodging. What matters, she says, is that Birt is pursuing excellence while ITV broadcasts drivel. "These matters surely deserve the attention of politicians far more than a little creative book-keeping, where only the Inland Revenue, not the viewers, lost out." We have, she grumbles, "turned into a nation of counting clerks."

If this is true, how does Anne Robinson get away with being paid a large six-figure salary for a weekly dish of stale tripe?



HALF WAY through its committee stage, the railways (destruction) bill is moving inexorably towards its climax — bringing pleasure only to de Sadeian doctrinaires like Michael Portillo and John Redwood, for whom no act of privatisation is too wanton.

As the vultures gather to pick at the corpse of the network, why doesn't the opposition simply announce that any incoming Labour chancellor will ignore Tory commitments to pour public subsidies down the throats of private operators, the so-called "franchisees"?

After spending a fortune on management consultants (who advised that the whole daft idea should be dropped), the government is about to spend another fortune on PR men to drum up interest among potential franchisees. They could easily be deterred if Labour had the nous to put them off.

Labour should have had a field day — but didn't — with the disclosure that as a result of privatisation *every* sector of BR will need to be subsidised. The truncation of InterCity (plundering its three profitable routes) means that not only will the rump remaining with BR have to be subsidised, but the three privatised routes (because of investment problems) will also need subsidies. So will RailFreight.

During the bill's committee stage the government has made a number of revealing admissions that have barely rated a mention in the media — like the obligation (there won't be any) on franchisees to run off-peak services; and the fate of Rail Cards and "saver" tickets.

With season tickets, these account for no less than 80 percent of all passenger travel on BR. There are 2.3 million holders of Rail Cards, and another 1.35 million hold Network South East cards or London Travel Cards. Rail cards and "savers" themselves account for 45 percent of all BR travel. But there is no prospect of any of these nationwide facilities surviving under privatisation — surely the mark of a government seriously uninterested in the welfare of the consumer?

There has already been one major climbdown: on "open access", which would have allowed competition against franchised services. And soon there will be another: when the whole point of setting up a track authority will be undermined by allowing franchisees to own and control their track, signalling and stations.

JOHN MAJOR'S claim to have led an underground resistance to Thatcher's industrial policy is challenged by his own public record.

In 1989, one of his first acts in government as chief secretary to the treasury was to increase the discount rate from 5 to 8 percent. This is the rate which governs investment by national and local government, nationalised industries and quangos (see *Eyes passim*). By putting up the rate, he made it more difficult for public investment in capital works. Money that would have been spent, for instance, on railways and roads was hoarded — to the pleasure of the monetarists.

ONE of the best kept secrets in the EC is that the last country to ratify Maastricht may be not Denmark or even Britain — but Germany, the country whose blustering leader threatens to hit the fast track without Britain.

Before Helmut Kohl can do that, he must drag his own country into ratifying the treaty. Four Green MPs and the German equivalent of the Tebbit-ites have asked the federal constitutional court to declare the treaty unconstitutional. Germany has agreed not to ratify until the court has given its verdict, because if the court were pressed it would probably issue an interim injunction which would hold up ratification anyway.

EVER SINCE he left high office after a conviction for drunk driving, Patrick Nicholls, Tory MP for Teignbridge, has been throwing himself with gusto into the parliamentary fray.

The *Eye* referred recently to his heroic speech on behalf of property owners who are up in arms over the government's mild plans to insist on the "enfranchisement" of a few leaseholds. This is daylight robbery, according to Mr Nicholls, who is paid by a number of top property owners, including the big de Walden estate.

Now Mr Nicholls pops up again in the debate on the new employment bill which does away with wages councils. Wages councils fix (at less than half the national male wage) the wages of people who are so low down the scale they need a law to protect them. This, says Mr Nicholls, is a shocking interference in the free market.

Especially in the hotel industry for employers like Minotels, which pays Mr Nicholls a fat fee to represent its interests in the House of Commons.

ENVIRONMENT secretary Michael Howard has turned down an invitation to address the influential parliamentary alternative energy group (PAEG) because he is "too busy".

The meeting was planned for June, but Howard already knows that he won't have time to attend. Nor did he offer any of his six junior ministers as an alternative.

PAEG is a most respectable, all-party group supported by National Power, British Nuclear Fuels and some of the biggest names in industry such as McAlpine and Shell. So why does Howard snub it?

Surely not because the audience will include environmentalists who might ask questions he cannot answer: like why he is cutting back on clean coal technology, which would reduce the acid rain we shower on the trees of Europe; and how he expects to honour our commitment to cut pollution by the year 2000 to our 1990 level.

LADY Olga Maitland, new girl Tory MP for Sutton and failed gossip hack, has wasted no time climbing aboard the lobbying gravy train. Since winning her seat last April she has collected a clutch of directorships as a vehicle for her foreign and defence interests.

Chief outlet is Defence and Security Forum Ltd (DSF), a propaganda outfit specialising in the Gulf and the Middle East. Two weeks ago La Maitland booked the grand committee room in the Commons for a meeting on Kuwait, sponsored by DSF Ltd and Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies Ltd (GUSS). The discussion was about missing Kuwaiti prisoners of war in Iraq, and the irony of GUSS as a co-host somehow eluded Lady O. It was GUSS that arranged for troops of Tory MPs to visit Iraq and suck up to Saddam Hussein in 1988.

Maitland is keen on Kuwait and has been trying to ingratiate herself with the ruling al-Sabah family. Early last year she visited the emir on a fund-raising trip, but was not the toast of Kuwait city. She bragged that she had held a meeting with John Major: in fact it was a brief exchange over a sandwich in the corner of a room where Major was meeting all the Tory parliamentary candidates.

Defence and Security Forum Ltd was incorporated last July, three months after the election. Maitland is president and, according to her entry in the register of members' interests, a director. The other directors are Derryck Ward, "a consultant"; Donald May, a "business consultant" and chairman of DSF Ltd; and David Powell. DSF's office is based at Powell's apartment at 32 Westminster Palace Gardens, SW1.

Maitland is, of course, a long-time propagandist for the MoD and weapons through Women and Dogs for Defence. In 1989 this was cemented when she set up Families for Defence Ltd. Apart from Lady O, its directors are her barrister husband Robin Hay; Derryck Ward; and David Powell. Six weeks ago it moved its registered office — also to 32 Westminster Palace Gardens.

Maitland's third directorship is with Tremagin International Holdings Ltd, which she joined last December. She is also a shareholder and so is Winston Churchill, Tory MP and defence specialist. Tremagin is stuffed full of "business consultants" and are "specialists" in the "marketing and supply of information technology and cable systems". Intriguingly, it also acts as "security specialists and consultants and to undertake and provide security services of every description".

Lady Olga says she receives no fees from these directorships. This is hardly surprising as they are new companies. The *Eye* will monitor her interests — politically and commercially — with some scrutiny.

PS: Lady O's husband, Robin Hay, is also a director of Euroforum Ltd, a company which began trading in 1989. It specialises in organising conferences and research into defence procurement and production and Nato. Like Defence and Security Forum Ltd, it advises and assists "outside bodies" like the Chinese embassy and is based at 32 Westminster Palace Gardens.

MPs FOR HIRE

IN A NEW series revealing MPs' business and financial interests, the *Eye* will list those MPs who are in the pay of various lobbies and the companies that bankroll them.

PART ONE: THE DEFENCE INDUSTRY

Nirj Deva *Brentford and Isleworth*: Consultant to Electronic Data Systems Corporation.

Sir Michael Marshall *Arundel*: Consultant to British Aerospace plc.

Cranley Onslow *Woking*: Consultant to British Helicopters.

Sir Geoffrey Pattie *Chertsey and Walton*: Chairman and director of GEC Marconi; director of Fairey Group plc.

Dame Angela Rumbold *Mitcham and Morden*: Consultant to Hunting Engineering Ltd.

Iain Sproat *Harwich*: Consultant to Airbus Industrie.

Michael Stephen *Shoreham*: Consultant to Electronic Data Systems (UK) Ltd.

John Wilkinson *Ruislip Northwood*: Consultant to Thorn EMI Electronics Ltd.

PS: Any further information about MPs' commercial interests gratefully received.

100 YEARS AGO

THE LATE Nicholas Ridley was given a gushing tribute by Maggie in last weekend's *Sunday Times*. "Incomparable Nicholas", boomed the headline, and underneath there was a further tribute from Alan Walters describing Ridley as "The best of Englishmen".

Thatch claimed he had resigned from her cabinet to save the government from embarrassment "when his views in a *Spectator* interview were grotesquely misrepresented" (ie accurately reported). His resignation was "a typically selfless act," she concluded.

However, Ridley was not always so selfless. Back in the late 1960s, when Anthony Wedgewood-Benn, as minister of technology, was trying to force through a proposal for the Lower Clyde Group of shipbuilders to take over the Upper Clyde Group, Wedgie Benn was not the only person interested in the scheme.

Ridley, then opposition spokesman for shipbuilding and from a family with business interests in coal exports and steel production, submitted a report recommending that there should be "a government butcher to cut up UCS and to sell (cheaply) to Lower Clyde and others the assets of UCS..."

As we pointed out in *Eye* 249, the use of the phrase "and others" was especially interesting. Ridley was then a director of an engineering subsidiary of the Newcastle shipbuilding consortium, Swan Hunter and Wigham Richardson — Upper Clyde's main competitor.

Then, of course, there was the notorious NIMBY affair, when Ridley was secretary of state for the environment. The newspapers appeared to overlook this sterling contribution to the integrity of British public life.

Ridley had just criticised people who accepted the need for more housing yet objected to local developments on what he called the "Not in my backyard principle" — hence NIMBY. Then, to the embarrassment of the government, it was revealed that Ridley himself had objected to a proposal to build five luxury houses which would have spoilt the view from his own backyard — a Queen Anne rectory in the Cotswold village of Naunton.

'Backbiter'

Grovel

CAN IT really be true, I wonder, that the Princess of Wales and Duchess of York are buying love-nests in the United States?

When the *Observer* heard this rumour two weeks ago, it got so excited it put the story at the top of its front page under the un-*Observer*ish headline DI AND FERGIE'S MYSTERY $26M PENTHOUSE IN NEW YORK. **It reported that a "mystery American millionaire" had given the fun-loving royal wives a three-storey apartment at the Pierre Hotel in Manhattan, which was now being extensively refurbished to meet their requirements. "The carpets have royal crests on them," it revealed excitedly. "Di's bed is large and oval."**

It was only when the front page was laid out and ready to go that a sceptical soul in the newsroom inquired whether the rumour had actually been checked at all. The answer, it transpired, was no. Di and Fergie's "mystery penthouse" was hastily pulled and replaced with a report about Presdient Clinton's policy on Aids.

"How are you at romantic comedy?"

● *I HEAR that Paul Routledge, the Observer industrial hack who is ghosting Arthur Scargill's memoirs, had a rude shock recently following a London Transport reception at which he had been visibly tired and emotional.*

The next day he rang up in a panic to ask whether anyone had found a pink exercise book. One of the cleaners had indeed found the book, and although it appeared to contain pages of writing in an indecipherable, child-like scrawl (shorthand), she had kept it just in case.

"Thank God for that," exclaimed Routledge when told the good news. "That's the first four chapters of Arthur's book."

AT A TV reception two weeks ago, the BBC's Armani-clad, fiscally-challenged director general, John Birt, found himself at the centre of a gaggle of media correspondents: Ray Snoddy of the *FT*; Maggie Brown of the *Indie*; Jonathan Miller of the *Sunset Times*; and Richard Brooks of the *Observer*.

He studiously declined to acknowledge Brooks's presence, however, having apparently taken exception to something the *Observer* man had written. Eventually Brooks could bear no more. "Are you going to ignore me forever?" he demanded. Birt did not reply, turning on his heels and walking away. "John!" the irate hack yelled at the departing figure. "You're a cunt!"

● *ONE HOPES porn baron David Sullivan will have better luck parking his Bentley at St Andrews, home of his newly acquired Birmingham City football club, than he did the last time he sought to become a soccer director.*

"Slug" Sullivan, who is desperate for respectability, tried two years ago to worm his way on to the board of West Ham, using the influence of his partner-in-crime Ralph Gold, boss of the Anne Summers sex shops and many other seedy enterprises. Alas! The duo's plans were thwarted and Sullivan suffered the indignity of being turned away from the directors' car park. "You wouldn't like it," Sullivan whined in a note to Gold.

The Slug's choice of managing director for Birmingham City — or Bummingham Titty, as it will presumably be renamed — is inspired. Karren Brady, Sullivan's 23-year-old girlfriend, may seem to lack any qualifications for running a football club; but she has an intimate knowledge of the game's finer points, gained through her close association with several members of the Arsenal squad, whom she meets in a private box at Highbury belonging to her father, Islington printer Terry Brady.

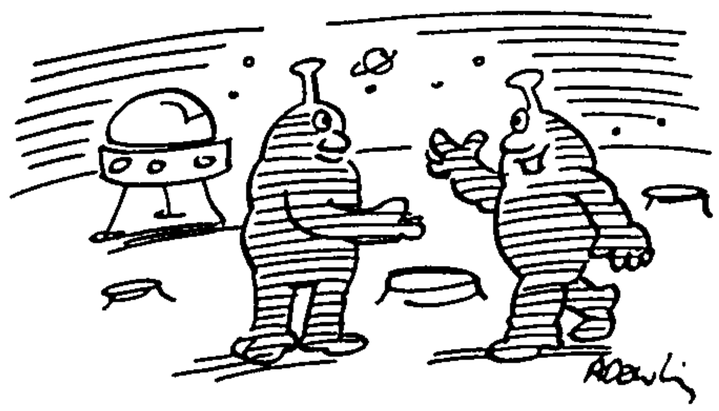
Staff at the Sport are praying for her success at Birmingham; for it should curtail her visits to the paper's London office near Old Street, from where she telephones darling David with regular bulletins on what his staff are saying about him.

HACKS WHO served on the weekly *Peterborough Standard* (now defunct) back in the early 1970s have been amused by the recent pontifications of *Sun* columnist Richard Littlejohn about Britain's crime problems, recalling an occasion when he was taken to task for his own delinquent behaviour.

Twenty years ago a young, bantam-weight reporter called Richard Littlejohn led a bunch of yobs into a bloody affray during a dance at the local technical college. His court appearance — at which he was described as ringleader of the affray — caused considerable embarrassment to the Sharman family, owners of the *Peterborough Standard*, who nevertheless gave the story unbiased front-page coverage. As a punishment Littlejohn was sent to Siberia — in this case his paper's sister title, the *Wisbech Standard*.

When I tax him about this blot on his past record as a citizen, Littlejohn is vague about the incident, though he admits he was hauled up in front of the beak and fined "forty or fifty pounds" (a not inconsiderable sum in Tony Barber's time as chancellor of the exchequer).

I suggest that perhaps he could give *Sun* readers the benefit of his direct experience of a justice that condemns more and understands less. "They should have flogged and hanged me," he replies with a chuckle. "It's the only language I understand."



"Yo dude, gimme four!"

Apology: Mr Yusuf Islam

ON 8 MAY 1992 I suggested that charitable funds raised by Muslim Aid had been misapplied in that instead of being spent on education in Pakistan the money had been spent on weapons for Afghan rebels.

Mr Yusuf Islam, the former pop singer Cat Stevens, is the chairman of Muslim Aid and the article may have implied that he was responsible for what had gone wrong. I accept that there was no truth in these criticisms and apologise to Mr Islam for this error.

Pip Pip!

Pseuds Corner

[Shere] Hite is at her best in the interrogative. She is strangely at ease with the very, very intimate: the ultimate listener; the ultimate sponge. If one were to divide women — metaphorically that is — into clitorises and vaginas, then Hite would be a vagina. Not chirpy, outgoing and tingling with sensations. But rather mysterious, inward-looking, absorbent, a much-publicised receptacle, perhaps just a social construct — but not, in any case, an entirely real experience.

AMANDA MITCHISON
Independent Magazine

Suddenly, I am acutely aware of a kinship with the England of Jane Austen, in which the fashionable chatter of the metropolis percolates only fitfully with the backdrop of a war on the mainland of Europe, while civilised life in the country still goes on. Plus ça change...

ROY STRONG
Country Life

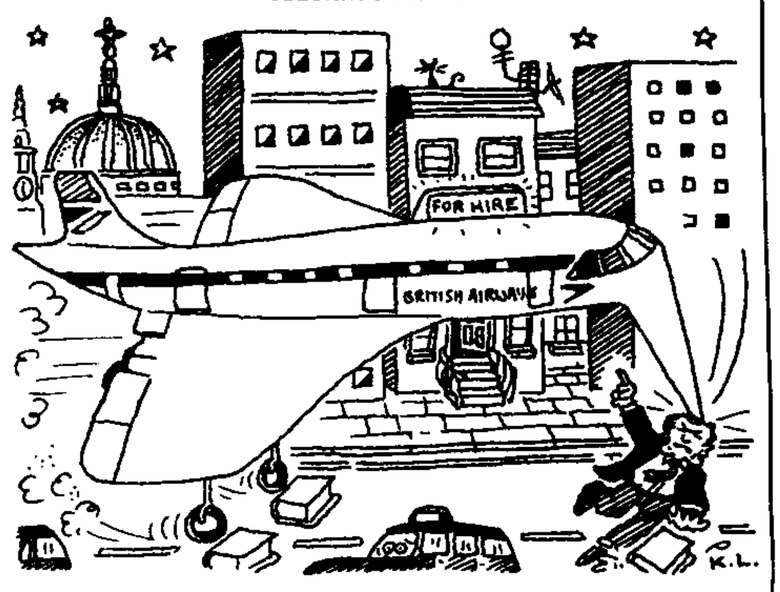
MORELS, DRIED

● Soaked for 15-30 minutes in hot water, strained and then added along with their soaking liquid, morels give a superb feral essence of loincloth to sauces and stews.

LESLIE FORBES
Observer Magazine

This is [Jeanette] Winterson at her best. She holds the words in her hands like voluptuous breasts, plump and firm. She strokes, kisses, weighs and admires them until they shine. This writer speaks in tongues. Didion-like she pares language back to the bone but never loses its sensuality. Words roll around in her mouth like blue grapes before the teeth pierce them and the juice explodes onto the reader's palate.

SUSAN MITCHELL
Adelaide Review



Nowadays, if Mary wants to go to Russia to see a Nobel Prize winner, she gets on the plane and goes. If I want to take Concorde, I walk out of my front door and get on the plane. It's such a privilege having money. It gives one such freedom, too.

JEFFREY ARCHER
Independent on Sunday

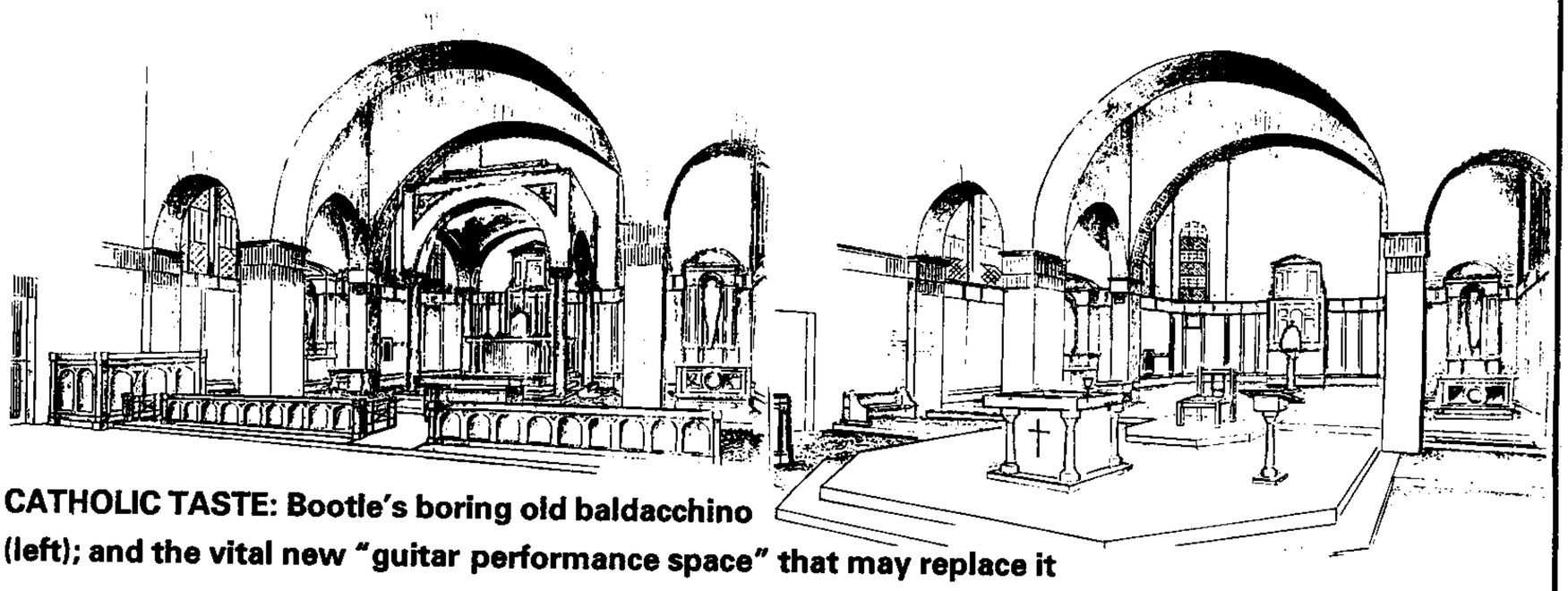
These homes are not closed, but excitingly open, aesthetic-cum-functional systems that depend on their dwellers interacting by developing appropriate interests over time to incorporate into the experience of their light, space and structure which function multi-dimensionally. As the lived perceptual experience of possible functional alternatives is part of their architects' conception of them, Sir Norman Foster's plans for 64 Old Church Street do not depart from, but rather fulfil, Erich Mendelsohn's intentions for the house.

SUSAN WILSMORE
Letter in Independent

CONTRIBUTORS: Andrew Loudon, E.P. Wilson, John Nicholson, Andrew Norton, Nigel Crowle, David Milsted.

£10 paid for entries

NOOKS and CORNERS



CATHOLIC TASTE: Bootle's boring old baldacchino (left); and the vital new "guitar performance space" that may replace it

I SUPPOSE we all follow instructions only when it suits us, but we surely expect slightly higher standards from the clergy.

"The buildings and requisites for worship, as signs and symbols of heavenly things, should be truly worthy and beautiful," it states in the general introduction to the *Roman Missal* published by authority of Pope Paul VI after the Second Vatican Council. "At all times the Church needs the service of the arts and allows for popular and regional diversity of aesthetic expression. While preserving the art of former times, the Church also tries to adapt it to new needs and to promote the art of each age."

Fair enough: *"While preserving the art of former times..."* And the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy makes it quite clear that it was never the intention of Vatican II to destroy works of art and architecture when reordering churches. Yet this is precisely what has happened, all over Britain.

The holocaust of fine church furnishings in Roman Catholic churches over the last two decades mirrors the iconoclastic zeal of Dowsing and the beauty-hating Protestants of the 17th century. Remember the case of the baldacchino in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Wimbledon (*Eye* 765)? Yet nobody would dream of throwing out the baldacchino in Westminster Cathedral (I hope) or in St Peter's in Rome. Why should ordinary parish churches be needlessly despoiled?

I write now in defence of another innocent baldacchino, that in the Church of St Robert Bellarmine, Orrell, Bootle, designed by Lionel Prichard. It is a fine piece of marble work, paid for by the parishioners during the dark depressed days of the 1930s, to beautify a simple interior. The parish likes it, but the new parish priest, Father "Ed" Cain, does not.

In November it was announced that "improvements and repairs" costing £100,000 were being designed by Anthony McMullen, architect. Only then did parishioners realise that this involved the gratuitous removal of the baldacchino and altar rails to make a sanctuary with a forward altar suitable for Fr Ed's exciting services with guitar accompaniment.

This caused outrage, especially as the parishioners are expected to pay for the "improvements" at a time when the faithful are being exhorted by Archbishop Warlock to dig into their pockets to keep the archdiocese afloat. A meeting was held last month at which parishioners were allowed to "air their views". But it was made quite clear by the chairman, Bishop O'Connor, that no vote would be taken and that work would go ahead regardless.

Yet even the "guidelines for the design and reordering of churches" issued by the archdiocese admit that "the recommendations made are not mandatory" and that "care should be taken to preserve objects of devotion which are well designed". Furthermore, "the wishes of the congregation should be taken into account in the matter of the decoration of the church..." and, in canon law, the fittings of a church belong to the parish, *not* the archdiocese.

At least when Anglicans wreck their churches it is done with the agreement of clap-happy parishioners. But in the Roman Church, all talk of consultation and democracy is a sham. The church remains authoritarian: archbishops and parish priests give orders and expect to be obeyed. And when the incumbent is a philistine destructive barbarian, beautiful sacred buildings are ruined to the distress of the faithful and to the loss of future generations.

Fr Ed's openness is shown by the fact that he keeps the church locked and declined to allow a *Grauniad* reporter see the threatened baldacchino. The only beneficiaries of these changes seem to be dim architects who draw out the destruction, and antique shops which are always full of cast-off Catholic tat.

JOCELYN de Stevens, CVO, likes to keep in the public eye. Recently the world was treated to two long and generally favourable profiles of him, in the Sunset Times and the Sunday Telegraph (which surely ought to know better). Despite the typewriter-throwing tantrums, it seems, the man longs to be loved.

What is curious is that he still harps on about his hatred of the civil service culture in English Heritage: "The civil service runs itself because politicians can't control it. But I'm not a politician..." Indeed; I at first guardedly welcomed Stevens's appointment as chairman in the hope that he would break the power of the civil servants who have been undermining the professionals ever since the quango was created by Michael Heseltine in 1984.

Yet in promoting the plan to emasculate the London division and in generally demoralising and inhibiting those who actually care about historic buildings, de Piranha Teeth is merely doing what the civil servants have always wanted. The people who are running (down) English Heritage are the chief executive, Jennie Page (who, it is rumoured, will soon move on to supervise the dismemberment of British Rail); Jane Sharman, another career civil servant who is director of conservation; and Paul Drury, who was responsible for the report on London which is causing such consternation.

Why is Jocelyn doing what they want? Does he not realise he is being manipulated by the civil servants he affects to despise? Or is he simply getting soft in old age?

'Piloti'

Sally Deedes

ONE of the projects put on "hold" for three years by cuts in government investment in London Undeground is the removal of "remaining fire hazardous material from stations".

The material is found in the linings that were introduced to give a more attractive finish to the cast iron tunnels. Bitumen and asbestos sheets were inserted between the cast iron tunnel rings, and white plastic panels of melamine were laid on top as a cosmetic finish.

After the severe fire in Oxford Circus in 1984 it was found that bitumen and asbestos placed in ceiling cavities had lost their fire resistant qualities, and according to pathologists, the smoke from the melamine/bitumen combination could be lethal within three minutes.

Such linings still exist on the Bakerloo and Jubilee lines, at Victoria station and several others.

At the time of the Kings Cross fire, the government denied there was any connection between cost savings and the loss of 31 lives (a finding that adversely affected compensation paid to victims and their families). The transport department could not now make a similar claim about the safety of the passengers should such a disaster happen again.

UN NEWS

DAVID OWEN, better known to *Eye* readers as Dr (now Lord) Death, has found his spiritual home at the United Nations.

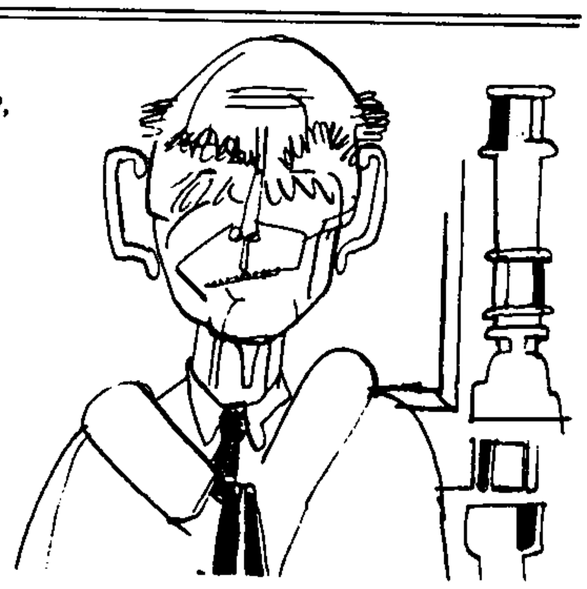
Celebrating a ceasefire between two *allies*, the Croats and the Bosnians, as a breakthrough, his peace team has now emerged with a chilling definition of balance. The Serbs need reassuring, they say, before their heavy weaponry can be put under control because their infantry force is much smaller.

Translated, this means that a minority of Serbian ethnic cleansers has had access to unlimited weapons from the old Yugoslav army, while their victims — the Bosnian majority — have been denied weapons because the Europeans — and Owen — insist on maintaining an arms embargo against the Bosnians.

Meanwhile diplomats make it plain that they think the much-trumpeted UN war crimes tribunal is just an exercise in political public relations. As Edward VIII might have said, "Something must *seem* to be done". In fact, the spectacle of Serb militia leader Karadjic being given red carpet treatment at the UN for the so-called peace talks, while being denounced as a war criminal by the US government, should show up the deal quite adequately.

However, there is one consolation. Boo Boo Ghali, the UN secretary-general, after speaking to the British foreign secretary Douglas Hurd, no longer thinks the British see him as a wog. Indeed, he likes the British so much it is likely that a senior sinecure will soon be found for Lord Death. David Stephen, Owen's former assistant during his brief time as Labour's foreign secretary and a failed SDP candidate, is Boo Boo's speech writer.

"Hi, honey, I'm Lord Home"



ROTTEN BOROUGHS

HACKNEY

CONTROVERSY continues to dog Hackney, Britain's poorest borough, where councillors have railroaded through plans to ruin the last leafy enclave of classic Victorian architecture.

Hackney council is backing the Sanctuary housing association's attempt to build new flats on open green space around Albion Square, once a favoured haunt of John Betjeman, in a desperate attempt to be able to claim success in new home building before next year's elections.

Albion Square locals, with a sudden attack of Nimby-ism, point to the hundreds of empty, habitable council houses nearby which the borough's scandal-ridden housing department (see *Eyes passim*) has left to rot, and to the town hall's tradition of destroying communities of private tenants to build nightmarish deck-access estates.

Locals also refer to an ancient covenant governing the square, left by the long-deceased owners of the estate surrounding it, which forbids the gardens to be used for anything other than educational or recreational purposes. (Mysteriously, the covenant was lost a few years ago in transit from one council department to another.)

The idea of preserving a genteel square populated by professionals and other politically-incorrect types enrages Hackney's Spartist rulers, who had even considered popping a jolly crack factory (ie tower block) on the cosy Albion Square gardens.

Interestingly, the Sanctuary housing association is chaired by local Hackney South & Shoreditch MP Brian Sedgemore, himself a former Albion Square resident.

HINCKLEY

MORE ON the battle of persecuted Independent Hinckley and Bosworth councillor Mike Handford to expose dirty dealings in Leicestershire.

Handford, *Eye* readers will recall, was persecuted by town hall officials last year when it was put about — quite wrongly — that he was abusing his position as a councillor to gain work. Attempts to remove him from the leisure services committee backfired when he revealed that council chief executive Alan Cleary had paid private investigators public money to spy on him, and had arranged for a questionnaire to be sent to him from a fictitious company based at the same address as the spooks.

Now Handford has announced that he is to fight May's *county* council elections on the hitherto unheard of "anti-corruption" ticket, accompanied by the bizarre request "Don't vote for me". Handford, who has formed his new Anti-Corruption party with former borough principal chief officer Frank Shaw, simply wants voters to read his election address which, he says, will include further revelations of alleged misuse of public funds.

BIRMINGHAM

DEBTS are emerging left, right and centre as the hunt for runaway Birmingham councillor and ex-Hattersley henchman Khalid Mahmood continues.

Mahmood left his wife to elope to Kuwait six months ago with his first cousin after forming a business partnership with a senior member of the Kuwaiti royal family, Prince Sheik Ahmad Fahad al-Ahmad al-Sabar.

The two met at the Birmingham meeting of the International Olympic Committee and stitched up a string of "nice little earners". But now other more pressing reasons are emerging for Mahmood's departure: such as two county court judgments against him and an alleged £30,000 debt to fellow councillor Mike Olley with whom he had been in business.

Mahmood is the son of Sabir Mirza, a sinister power-broker of Asian votes who has long kept Hattersley in power in his Sparkbrook constituency through his control of the British Kashmiri Association in which Mahmood was a project director. Mahmood has been away so long he has been disqualified from the council. But if some members of the local party are happy to see him gone they should take a close look at who was lined up to replace him.

The list included ex-councillor and ex-planning chairman Frank McLoughlin, famous for his role in the Tandoori takeaway scandal when a curry house owned by a fellow Labour councillor won planning permission on a Labour whip — never usually used in planning. Another was Sardul Marwa, recently involved in an attempt to deselect Clare Short from Ladywood — with the help of dozens of bogus union delegates.

Strangely the favourite is Tony Kennedy, a white Labour party activist who coincidentally has already got Mahmood's job at the BKA. The interest is all down to expectations that Fattersley will quit at the next election. Mahmood was being groomed for the job. Observers expect a similar debacle in the adjacent Small Heath.

HARINGEY

THE north London borough of Haringey, not known for its abundance of coal mines, is certainly renowned for the political posturing of its councillors.

At a full council meeting last month, a deputation from the borough's library support group was allowed just five minutes to present the case to save Hornsey's reference and music libraries from the axe; and a similarly short courtesy was extended to voluntary action groups who also face big cuts, including the likely closure of a women's refuge.

But the really important business came when the poseur councillors played at *national* politics, and gave a delegate from the National Union of Mineworkers a full 35 minutes to thank the people of Haringey for their support and expound on a lost cause.

That the delegate was a chum of Haringey's mayor, Reg Rice, is neither here nor there. The council has debts of £700 million and budget cuts a-plenty in the offing. No doubt voters — even the coal-not-dole ones — will remember this bizarre set of priorities when members of the Labour-controlled council face reelection next year.

LAMBETH

HOW SERIOUSLY does Lambeth chief executive Herman Ouseley take his responsibility to find out how his loony council lost more than £10 million in public money?

Ouseley, shortly to leave Lambeth for a lucrative post with the commission for racial equality, recently gave his first report to the council's policy committee since the borough's public humiliation over its multi-million pound losses. But it seems that considerations of political correctness, Lambeth's nemesis to date, rather than financial prudency are still paramount.

In his report Ouseley outlines setting up "an investigative team of independent quality surveyors and independent auditors servicing the inquiry panel... the majority of whom are women." The panel wimmin could then include such stalwarts of Lambeth politics as former council leaders Linda Bellos and Joan Twelves, both of whom were in office while Lambeth's corrupt practices occurred.

Ironically, the council's investigations into the missing monies (the £200,000 cost to be borne by the ever-suffering ratepayer) is being headed by a woman, top city lawyer Elizabeth Appleby QC.

At least Appleby's appointment removes any chance of further obstruction to the course of justice from the town hall's very own apron-throwing lodge, whose existence was recently discovered after a copy of the *1992 Masonic Handbook* was left in a committee room.

GLASGOW

AN ALARMING new form of cult-worship has broken out in Glasgow, 1990 European city of culture, where council art galleries chief Julian Spalding has paid £10,000 for a bust of recently-deposed council leader Pat "Tin Pan" Lally.

The 11ft bust, in which Paisley artist Sandy Stoddart depicts Lally as the "unsophisticated and honest common man", is to take up residence in Glasgow's Museum of Modern Art, where grateful chargepayers will be able to make a Mao-styled pilgrimage to honour Lally, now the council's deputy leader.

Stoddart has explained his decision to cast the hitherto-insignificant councillor into stone by claiming he had become "fascinated by the mythologisation of Lally" after the latter's controversial decision to remove painter Ian McCulloch's modernist murals from Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall, a move which saw Lally castigated as a "philistine" in avant-garde sections of the Gorbals.

WAKEFIELD

AT LEAST one local authority in the recession-ravaged north of England is awash with dosh.

Labour-controlled Wakefield, West Yorkshire, having found its budget for councillors' expenses underspent by £250,000, has come up with a thoroughly egalitarian use for the quarter of a million pound surplus.

Rather than hand the money over to an undeserving, spendthrift council department, the councillors have gallantly decided... to redistribute the money equally among themselves. Now all councillors are £4,000 richer, regardless of how much they had legitimately incurred in expenses.

UNIVERSITY NEWS

IN the last issue we referred to a memo from Garth Roberts, Manchester University's director of finance, asking for a cheque to be made out to the law firm of Pannone & Partners.

We suggested that the university might be paying the legal bills of the vice-chancellor, Professor Martyn Harris (whom we wrongly stated had been *charged* with kerb crawling). The bills paid by the university were in fact settlement for an entirely different case. Professor Harris paid his own legal bills in full and neither he, the university, nor Pannone and Partners were acting improperly. Apologies to all concerned.

TVE

Casualty
(BBC1)

Doctor Finlay's Casebook
(ITV)

IN ONE OF those useful coincidences occasionally thrown up by the mêlée of television schedules, the first episode in the ITV revival of *Doctor Finlay's Casebook* dealt with the birth of the NHS and of British post-war optimism, while, in the same week, the last episode of that other great medical serial, the BBC's *Casualty*, covered the symbolic death of the NHS and, in a terrifying fiery cataclysm, of British social hope.

At a 1946 party to welcome Dr Finlay back from the war, old Caledonian businessmen shivered at the recklessness of the Labour government and its plan for universal medical provision: "Och, it'll be a bottomless pit... There'll never be enough money!" they cried. But idealistic young Dr Finlay — played by David Rintoul as a thinner and hirsute John Smith — flashed his eyes like traffic lights and snapped: "Medicine isn't a business!"

But down at Holby General, 47 years later, a gang of hot-rodders from the local estate burned down the hospital while Charlie and Duffy and the rest were working inside on the victims of the gang's stabbing spree. Both welfare and the state were on the edge of collapse.

So anyone who watched both got an accidental history lesson. And not just on the history of medicine. *Casualty* represented — following in a great tradition, but one of few examples still around — the bold and subversive ambitions of socially-realistic British television drama. *Doctor Finlay's Casebook* — a soft old hit revived as a sop to the lobby which thinks that if TV were nicer, so would life be — represents the new safe and satisfy-the-advertisers direction of television drama. So anyone watching both programmes viewed a double cycle of British dereliction and the ruining of institutions.

The most amazing thing about the return of *Doctor Finlay's Casebook*, for example, is that the producers have been telling the press that the old broadcasting post-war-horse has been toughened up for its return. By this, they seem to mean the cocktail party conversation about the validity of the dream of the NHS. Otherwise, the plot is stock misunderstandings — the boar who is rude to Finlay on the train turns out to be the new locum! — and sentiment: Janet the housekeeper and the bald bachelor chemist are edging towards matrimony!

tion, whose husband must never know that she had sinfully chosen to save her own life rather than the bairn's. Pass the bedpan, Alice.

The true justification of *Doctor Finlay's Casebook* — an undemanding picture album of the past — was apparent in the way the shots were framed. The camera twice paused lovingly on a period Fyffes banana poster: "A meal in a moment!" A period car or ambulance drove past in the foreground or rear of almost every establishing shot, the shot establishing that a lot of money had been spent on dressing the locations. The director lingered for so long on the steam trains warming up in the station that you thought your set had caught fire.

You kept thinking your set had caught fire in the final episode of the *Casualty* series, too, but this had more to do with steaming than steam trains. The episode was shunted back to a later time, after *Casualty* became a key target in the Major government's ingenious attempt to suggest that drama which reflects the condition of society is responsible for society's condition. Not since Dan Quayle blamed the Los Angeles riots on the sit-com *Murphy Brown* has there been such an intellectually incompetent piece of political buck-passing.

In fact *Casualty* — though it has unblinkingly and consistently represented the decline of the NHS and the violence of society — does not do so with a shrug. It is impeccably moralistic: for example, in the contentious final episode, a black youth in the gang was subjected to a long lecture by an older black role model among the nursing staff of Holby General.

Terrifyingly choreographed by director Michael Owen Morris, the final scenes — in which a housing estate and a hospital, both symbols of the British post-war dream, blazed, while the staff operated outside under arc lights — were one of the great achievements of British television drama. Yet — pushed back later as an apology to the government for television's well-known role in the running down of hospitals and housing estates — the episode was prefaced with the weasel announcement: "This *Casualty* contains scenes of power and impact, which is why we're making our visit to Holby General later than advertised..." What happened to the idea that television drama was *supposed* to contain scenes of power and impact?

Indeed, it was during this episode that Square Eyes came to realise that he (or she) may well be too ruined by growing up with *The Wednesday Play* and *Play For Today* to appreciate mainstream ITV drama. Doctor Cameron — played by Ian Bannen as an Edinburgh rock with a stick — was slipping abortion pills to a young woman. Finlay discovered that her pregnancy had not been entered in the medical notes. Square Eyes assumed that Cameron had banged her up himself and was removing the evidence. But, no: she was a devout Catholic with a heart condi-

'Square Eyes'

I-BSkyB

ROBOT RON

News of the World Sunday Magazine

CONTRIBUTOR: M.A. Hush,
[redacted]

MEDIA NEWS

LOUD guffaws and shrieks of disbelief greeted John Birt's memo to BBC staff which began: "I am grateful for the messages of support..."

Who could have they have been from? Lester Piggott? The late John Poulson? Cap'n Bob, perhaps, or even Elizabeth R herself? Certainly no one in Television Centre, Broadcasting House or the World Service — unless they were senior managers like Janet Street-Porter, who are on similar tax-avoiding keep-all-you-earn schemes.

Ordinary staff, the ones who produce programmes as opposed to spawning facade companies like John Dirt Productions, are outraged. Personnel departments have been inundated with calls from irate freelances — many, incidentally, former staffers who were "casualised" in one or other of the rounds of Checkland-Birt cuts.

For years these people (*genuine* freelances with Schedule D tax-paying arrangements) have been told they must be taxed and national insured at source: ie, they must suffer the disadvantages of being "on staff" without any of the advantages such as holiday pay, sickness rights and some, however limited, job security.

The sheer hypocrisy — of personnel who are not members of staff being taxed as if they were, and the high-ups who insist on such a system being members of staff but taxed as if they were not — has been lost on no one at the Beeb. A staff member of 25 years' standing put up this memo in reply to Birt's:

MESSAGE FOR MR BIRT

Thank you for your message dated 1 March, by which I do not find myself reassured. I feel considerable dismay, not only because you turned out not to be a member of the staff, but also because your tax arrangements will not stand up to the foreseeably unfriendly scrutiny of rival news media. I don't suppose the licence-payers were particularly impressed either, the conduct of your affairs being not illegal but entirely inappropriate. Your freelance status even when viewed in retrospect makes you seem unnervingly detached from the BBC and its future. The curious state of your finances appears, to a member of staff paid a great deal less than yourself, and apparently a great deal more aware of how easy it is to drop the BBC in the shit, to be a combination of venality and stupidity hard to stomach, but easy to blush for.

But the scandal over Birt's advantageous tax status is only part of a broader picture — of secrecy, control, unaccountability and lack of consultation with staff and licence payers that have been needed to push through the radical changes that have resulted in so many cock-ups.

Speculation is now centred on who tipped the press off to take a look at Birt's accounts at Companies House. Disappointed BBC1-controller applicants are one possibility; but it is unfair to link the fact that the revelation came the weekend that Ian Phillips — the director of finance made the scapegoat for the near £60 million overspend at Network Television — left the BBC. His friends are not like that.

Meanwhile, the full extent of the incredible incompetence that led to the overspend is

CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
"I SAY, BIRT, HOW COME YOU GET A £3,666 ARMANI SUIT ALLOWANCE?"
DG's Tax dodging
"THEY GO AT THE KNEES!"
"Trebles & a DisGrace all round!"
BIAS
Ken Pyne

COMIC TAX RELIEF

becoming clearer. Senior managers believe the "lost" sum is at least double the original estimate. The programme consequences are terrifying: £120 million is more than 25 per cent of BBC1 and 2's annual spending. Quality, it seems, will be as elusive as a John Dirt Productions production over *the next* few years.

Hacks at TV Centre fondly recall the days when the BBC allowed them to investigate this kind of thing...

LAST YEAR a consortium headed by Sir David English and financed by Lord Rothermere's Associated Newspapers won the licence to run teletext services on ITV and Channel 4, beating the previous licence-holders, Oracle, after a campaign rife with skulduggery.

At the time the *Eye* cast doubt on Teletext UK's promise to offer a serious news service, bearing in mind that much of its news was to be provided by the *Daily Mail*.

And so it has proved. Only weeks after going on the air — it began on new year's day — Teletext has already been ticked off by the Independent Television Commission for breaking its promises. One of the licence requirements was that the news service should be available 24 hours a day. But Teletext decided to run it on Channel 4, whose transmitters close down during the night. Nor did it put out the number of pages of news required. "There was some confusion about pages that Teletext thought were acceptable," an ITC spokesman told the *Eye*. "Some pages they thought they could count as news and we didn't."

The ITC was even more alarmed to find that on the main ITV channel Teletext was transmitting an "adult service" called *After Hours*, which included sexual confessions and "contact" advertisements (this in spite of the fact that Sir David Fester is a stern Christian moralist). There had been no mention of such a service in the company's franchise application, and the ITC warned Teletext that *After Hours* was lacking in "taste and decency". "There were some things that got on to the screen that shouldn't have done," the ITC man explained. Rather than risk the ignominy of having its licence revoked after only two months, Teletext last week took *After Hours* off the air.

HEADLINES that greeted Alan Yentob's appointment as controller of BBC1 concentrated on *Eldorado*, the huge turkey bequeathed him by his predecessor. But as Botney casts his eye over BBC1 schedules, he will find another disaster area in the shape of *Panorama*.

This year, *Panorama*'s ratings have shocked even its longest serving retainers, who are accustomed to the programme's inexorable decline. These days the show regularly fails to attract even three million viewers.

So far, for every week but one in 1993, *Panorama* has scored lower ratings than any other programme on competing channels. This means that on most Mondays the BBC's mainstream popular channel is beaten in the peaktime *Panorama* slot not just by ITV, but by the minority fare on BBC2 and C4.

But worry not: Samir Shah, the BBC's inspiring current affairs supremo, has things in hand. He has just appointed a new deputy, the almost equally inspiring David Aaronovitch, who is chiefly famous for launching the unwatchable *On The Record*.

Apart from brief interludes at *Today* and in the Westminster office, what has he done to merit the job? Well, he used to be at LWT... with Samir Shah. Another Birtian-LWT-er to the, er, rescue.

AS HAPLESS staff know, consultants are brought in to the BBC with the same alarming frequency as a drunk gets drunk. But the appointment of consultants Mercer Fraser to investigate certain aspects of the BBC's prized pension fund was well overdue.

Horror stories abound of redundant staff (of whom there are hundreds) not being given their pension entitlements, and the current belief is that around one third of existing pensioners are being paid incorrect amounts.

Needless to say the report produced by the consultants was unbelievably damning. Shrewdly, by BBC standards, it was given very limited circulation and kept, as far as possible, from the recognised trades unions.

Who or what was responsible for the chaos? "Bad management."

Surely this couldn't be a reference to the ex-director of finance Ian Phillips, the man, you may recall, who left the corporation's employment soon after the announcement that between them BBC1 and BBC2 had "lost" something in the region of £60 million?

Obviously not, because according to *Ariel*, the in-house magazine (*Pravda* to its readers), Phillips has now set up his own company and "will maintain links within the BBC as adviser to the managers and trustees of the pension fund". Amazingly, on the same page of *Ariel* is a long article explaining why John Birt has decided to do precisely the opposite and leave the employment of John Birt Productions Ltd to join the BBC payroll.

GMTV has fallen prey to the F-factor again, but this time it is the F for fuckwit factor: an impressive list of their hacks were party to Rocky Ryan's latest hoax.

On 11 February Ryan rang GMTV and spoke to producer Stuart Maisner, purporting to be a Yugoslav diplomat who would only give his name as Milan. He claimed to have information about a British subject who was recruiting mercenaries to fight for the Muslims in Bosnia. "I gave 'em all the bollocks, like," Ryan explained to the *Eye*. He even gave them his phone number, which is in the phone book under Rocky Ryan, and said that it was the number for a "Pete" McKenzie, ex-SAS, ex-Para, etc. McKenzie, so "Milan" claimed, had been recruiting mercenaries from northern England and France.

Maisner duly rang up "McKenzie", who had an Irish accent and emanated an air of authenticity by saying things like "How did you people get my number?" and "The fact is I've broken no law."

After initially refusing to be interviewed, and after calls from Deborah Kelly, Nigel Hancock and Mike O'Driscoll, "McKenzie" agreed to do an interview in silhouette and semi-darkness. He suggested a GMTV crew should meet him at the Wembley Hilton, close to Ryan's lair. "McKenzie" did not turn up, of course, but Ryan did, a couple of hours after the appointed hour of the meeting, to find GMTV's chief correspondent Sue Savill and a crew kicking their heels outside the hotel.

The GMTV team wasted four hours waiting for the non-existent "McKenzie", but by the following day they realised that they had been victims of Rocky Ryan, since they rang the number they had been given for "McKenzie" and asked to speak to Ryan.

LUVVIES

Which living person do you most admire?

Shakespeare. To me he is still alive.

ROBERT LEPAGE
Guardian

Brian Blessed, the actor, is in training for his most challenging role yet, an attempt to become the oldest man to climb 29,028ft Mount Everest,

"It is going to be like doing 50 King Lears," Mr Blessed admitted yesterday. "It is horribly difficult and frightening."

Daily Telegraph

Submitted by E. Strobes, E.D.J. Hay.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

O·B·N

The Sixth Duke of Westminster has accepted the invitation to become the University's first Chancellor and was formally appointed in this position by the Board of Governors from 1 January...

...Landowner, farmer, businessman, soldier, developer, entrepreneur and conservationist, His Grace is many things to many people, a man whose drive and talents match this University's motto of 'Many Arts, Many Skills'.

Manchester University Newsletter

Submitted by Anon (fee to Oxfam)

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

PRISON NEWS

WINSON GREEN prison in Birmingham has been rocked by the second damning judicial indictment in two months of the savagery and incompetence of some of its staff.

In December a county court judge awarded £3,120 to convicted murderer John Bowden after hearing how staff repeatedly beat him. Now the prison has been told to pay compensation to the family of John Ryan, killed by *dehydration in the prison hospital*.

He had been locked in a hospital prison cell with the heating full on during a July heatwave after two weeks of no food or water. He was mis-diagnosed as psychotic by two prison doctors who failed to spot he needed a drink.

Birmingham high court judge Mr Justice Tucker said prison authorities and doctors had been negligent in depriving Ryan of water and in not diagnosing his condition. But new evidence released to the *Eye* suggests negligence is a little charitable as a description.

A fellow "trusty" prisoner has made formal statements that officers banned him from taking milk to Ryan, who was seen as a malingerer because of a gammy leg. Ryan was also allegedly tormented by officers who shouted through the door: "Aren't you dead yet?" among other caring remarks. A second prisoner, since released and traced by the *Eye*, confirms the evidence.

It will never be tested in court because the statements were only made thanks to publicity from the hearing and arrived too late for the judge to accept them. It is a testament to the horrifying state of Winson Green, however, that Ryan's family won without them.

WATER NEWS

HUGELY profitable Yorkshire Water has been in the dock again for its couldn't-care-less attitude to the environment.

At Beverley crown court the privatised mini-monopoly admitted allowing raw sewage to pour into a stream at Driffield. The court heard that the quantity of sewage — containing untreated human waste and condoms, among other delights — was 10 times over the safety limit.

After it had been alerted, a relaxed Yorkshire Water took two days to stop the flow. As a result, the stream was polluted for more than a year. Paul Genney, prosecuting for the national rivers authority (NRA), said: "The defendants, because of their delay, displayed a couldn't care less attitude. The beck returned to the Middle Ages."

Sentencing was adjourned, but Yorkshire Water should have little difficulty paying any fine. Despite half-yearly profits of £72 million, it is increasing charges from 1 April by more than 6 per cent — somewhat more than the rate of inflation — which follows last year's 7 per cent increase. The company didn't bother to announce the rise publicly until *after* it had sent out new bills to more than half its 1.8 million captive customers.

DOING THE ROUNDS

● "**FARNHAM hospital** will not, repeat will not, close. Indeed, when I've retired from parliament I intend to come here for my zimmer frame." So said local MP and health secretary Virginia Bottomley. She'll have to hurry: by April the laundry will have closed, making 100 redundant, with another 100 to follow when 60 geriatric and surgical beds transfer to **Frimley Park hospital.**

● MANAGERS at the **Alexandra Hospital** in **Redditch** have instigated the usual closures and cancellations in response to a £600,000 overspend. At least £100,000 is owed to it by three fundholding GP practices in **Bromsgrove**. But when the GPs asked why they had not been billed, the hospital said that incompetence in the finance department meant there was inadequate information on which to charge them and the debts had been written off. While physiotherapy posts have been frozen and agency nurses banned, money has been found to employ four new accountancy assistants.

Meanwhile, due to a shortage of accommodation at the Alex, student nurses are turfed out of their rooms as soon as they qualify and married doctors with children are offered only single rooms. When the Ugandan exploits of general manager John Parkes as well as two managerial colleagues came to light, they were swiftly found hospital accommodation. The poorly planned closure of much of nearby **Barnsley Hall psychiatric hospital** has reduced doctors' accommodation to an insecure, on-site caravan. Although nurses receive training in the control and restraint of violent patients, doctors (one of whom is 32 weeks pregnant) do not because it costs too much money.

● THE planned merger of **London's UCH** and **Middlesex hospitals** has left paired senior nurses fighting for one job and many facing redundancy. But there has been no such merging of managerial posts. The two principal and two junior business analysts keep their jobs, and a new post has been created for redundant project manager Philip Whitworth. He is a friend of acting director of contracts Stephen Hopkins, who in turn gets on famously with chief executive Charles Marshall.

● DON CRUIKSHANKS, chief executive of the NHS in **Scotland**, is to cut acute beds there by 5,000 in a move that jeopardises 13,500 jobs. More than 1,000 acute beds are to go in **Glasgow** alone, despite the **Royal Infirmary's** recent closure because it was full.

● THE psychiatric deaf unit at **Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital** — one of only three in the country — opened officially last month. But it has only received enough money to remain open until April. The reemployment prospects of the nursing assistants, some of whom are deaf, are bleak.

● LYNNE MILLIGAN, director of contracting and business planning for the broke **Essex and Herts Health Service**, has sent a memo to consultants. "It is vital that we identify and 'fast track' GP fundholder patients for all outpatient and inpatient activity. New referral letters from fundholding practices will be marked in red on receipt and placed in a separate folder from non fund-holding patients." A hint of two tiers, perhaps?

● THE **Bath Clinic**, a private hospital where a patient expired last year following a pharyngeal pouch repair, has sent a bulletin to fundholding GPs offering discounts on "longer stays" and "day cases". No mention is made of permanent stays.

● **NORTH Mersey Community NHS Trust** is restructuring its district nursing service "to improve the quality of service to the people of **Liverpool**". This involves cutting the number of G grade sisters from 89 to 55 and "inviting" the rest to compete for downgraded (ie cheaper) posts. Elsewhere, **Somerset health authority** has decided it no longer needs community mental handicap nurses in its mental health and learning disabilities unit, and the closure of **Trinity general hospital** in **Taunton** is also being rushed through. **Claybury psychiatric hospital**, part of **Forest Healthcare NHS trust**, is likewise doomed.

● DOUG ELLIS, chairman of **Sutton Coldfield's Good Hope hospital** (and Aston Villa FC) has announced his non-executive directors for the new trust: a chartered accountant, a solicitor, a teacher, an estate agent and the ex-secretary of "Cheshire Smile". Perhaps they will discover why a geriatric ward with 19 patients was staffed solely by a student nurse for four hours. One patient climbed over the cot side and broke her arm while the student was attending an emergency.

● NURSES' accommodation at **London's Nightingale and Guy's College of Health** is a cockroach-infested fire-hazard with rationed toilet paper and sparse cooking and washing facilities. In **Birmingham's Mussan House** and **Woodlands** nurses' homes, rat traps are laid in the kitchen. And **Penbury hospital** in **Tonbridge, Kent**, is trying to hush up an attack of scabies.

● THE **United Leeds Teaching hospitals trust**, which sacked whistleblowing biochemist Chris Chapman from **Leeds General Infirmary** (*Eyes passim*), has been praised by Mrs Bottomley for its "openness and good practice".

Critics feel the trust has double standards, and point to an interesting episode that happened in 1989 when Dr Chapman was complaining that, among other things, NHS employee Dr Ian Barnes was a paid consultant for Medgenix while working in the LGI's chemical pathology department. Although his consultancy was admitted, health chiefs cleared Dr Barnes of wrongdoing and later promoted him. He's now head of department and sat on the panel that selected Dr Chapman for redundancy last year.

However, also in 1989, just a stone's throw from the LGI at Leeds crown court, a judge took a dimmer view of NHS employees being paid by commercial companies. Arthur Gunawardena, head of information for **Leeds Western Health Authority** (the trust's forerunner), was sacked and prosecuted on corruption charges for receiving payments from a computer firm which supplied the authority.

Judge Bennett QC said: "The purity of the public service must be maintained, in my judgement, and when offences of this sort are detected it leaves me with no alternative but to pass a custodial sentence." Gunawardena was jailed for nine months and sacked. He is black. Dr Barnes is white.

M.D.

CHARITY NEWS

THE GOVERNMENT is not alone in closing down hospitals. In Brighton, one charitable trust is also jumping on the bandwagon, and the Tarner Home, a small but much-loved hospice for the terminally ill, appears to be closing itself down.

The cost of maintaining the building in which it is currently situated, plus cack-handed management by the trustees, appears to be the problem and things are looking grim.

There are no definite relocation plans and, even more worrying, no contingency plans for the continuing care of the patients who will still be at the Tarner after the closing date of 1 April. The matron, Anne Cook, and her specialist team received redundancy notices at the beginning of January. Since then they have been almost totally excluded from the trustees' deliberations. This, together with alleged changes in the original constitution of the Tarner Home, has led to grave concern about the commitment of the trustees to the continuation of the high quality residential care in which it excels.

None of this, however, seemed to dampen the spirits of Tarner's boorish honorary treasurer and local worthy, Trevor Vokins, who conducted a packed public meeting last Saturday on Tarner's future in a spectacularly patronising and insensitive manner.

Relatives and patients heckled and exclaimed in disgust (one leaving in tears), but to no avail. Lucky for Vokins, Andrew Bowden, MP for Brighton Kemptown, kept a tight check on the meeting's attempts to express its displeasure. His neutral stance and reluctance to get too involved did not please a large number of his assembled constituents. However, nothing could hide the fact that public confidence in the ability of Mr Vokins and his trustees to find an appropriate solution to Tarner's problems is rock bottom.

Anyone interested in saving Tarner should contact *Private Eye*.

Letters

Fly swotter

Sir,

I refer to the lead Grovel piece in your last edition but one.

In that article you repeated the allegation that I "smeared" Richard Branson. Although I object to that suggestion, I have come to the conclusion that you are probably right.

*The trouble is that "smear" is a word which is uglier than its definition: (*CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY*) "(seek to) discredit publicly".*

What actually happened was that I produced a report almost entirely from public sources; Companies House and press cuttings. It said some good and some bad things about Virgin. There were two aspects which Branson seemed particularly to object to. They were "Finances" and "Heaven".

If to shed light on Branson's finances was "to discredit (him) publicly", I cannot quarrel with the reliable COD *and I must, therefore, accept that I "smeared" him.*

To most people, however, I suggest that "smear" means something like: "damage by telling lies". That I did not do.

Heaven was not included in my report to "smear" Branson by either definition.

The report was written for BA directors. The short resumé on Heaven was compiled mainly from press cuttings. It was included because I thought it interesting. I would find it interesting if any other public figure were to own that nightclub. Try fitting it to say Ian Botham, Lord Weinstock, Freddie Laker, Richard Ingrams, Kelvin MacKenzie. I still do think it interesting.

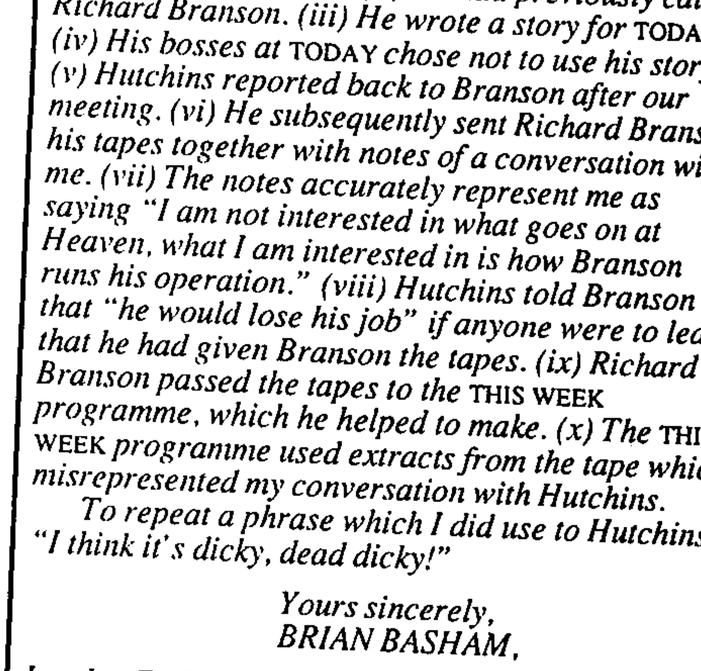
The main purpose of your article was to report what had occurred when Chris Hutchins so badly repaid my wife's friendship and support. The events were as follows:

(i) The worm Hutchins, whom my wife had helped to save from drug addiction, came to my home wired for sound. (ii) He had previously called Richard Branson. (iii) He wrote a story for TODAY. *(iv) His bosses at* TODAY *chose not to use his story. (v) Hutchins reported back to Branson after our meeting. (vi) He subsequently sent Richard Branson his tapes together with notes of a conversation with me. (vii) The notes accurately represent me as saying "I am not interested in what goes on at Heaven, what I am interested in is how Branson runs his operation." (viii) Hutchins told Branson that "he would lose his job" if anyone were to learn that he had given Branson the tapes. (ix) Richard Branson passed the tapes to the* THIS WEEK *programme, which he helped to make. (x) The* THIS WEEK *programme used extracts from the tape which misrepresented my conversation with Hutchins.*

To repeat a phrase which I did use to Hutchins: "I think it's dicky, dead dicky!"

Yours sincerely,
BRIAN BASHAM,

London EC1.



"Good evening, sir – J. Edgar Hoover's Witness"

Mote and beam

Sir,

I have just returned from a short holiday to find that the Leicester Royal Infirmary Eye Department where I work, has yet again been mentioned in despatches by your correspondent MD.

Some months ago MD accused us of greed, by trying to coerce NHS patients requiring surgery to pay for it privately. Long waiting lists are often not the surgeon's fault, but there may well have been some truth in your allegations.

More recently MD accused us of incompetence, that our patients had so much astigmatism post-operatively that we were buying an Excimer laser to correct it. As our associate manager pointed out to you in a letter that you published, we had no plans to buy this particular laser, which in any case does not correct astigmatism.

In your recent publication (EYE 813) you state that "the LRI is now advertising its brand spanking new Excimer laser in women's magazines etc." Alas the said laser has not been installed at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, but at the Bupa Hospital, Leicester, for the benefit of patients who are prepared to pay generously, in order to throw away their glasses. The laser still does not correct astigmatism, although one day it might be able to.

I am sure that MD's laudable attempts to cure corruption and incompetence in the health service would be more effective if he made the right diagnosis in the first place.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN SANDFORD-SMITH,

Consultant Ophthalmologist, The Leicester Royal Infirmary.

R U Catholic?

Sir,

Since your piece appeared about poor recruitment of Catholics to the RUC, two officers of that force have been murdered by the IRA.

Since most Catholics live in areas where republican murder gangs hold sway, don't you think intimidation might be as big a factor in Catholic recruitment as Protestant bigotry?

Yours sincerely,
STEVE HAYES,

Southampton.

Present and correct

Sir,

There is a false statement about me in the issue of PRIVATE EYE of 26 February (page 4):

"Sir Gordon... is so terrified of the controversy which has blown up on the (Mirror) board that he solves it by not appearing. Borrie was not present at the crucial meeting on 17 February..."

I was in fact present as all board members whom you mention — and others — can testify.

As the false statement I have quoted from PRIVATE EYE is of course damaging to my reputation, no doubt you will wish to record a correction and an apology in your next issue.

Yours sincerely,
SIR GORDON BORRIE QC,

London EC4.

Suckers

Sir,

I see that Sean Gabb is touting his services in your correspondence columns (Letters, EYE 814). Most of us would think it more seemly to pay for a small ad.

I wouldn't advise any reader to take up his offer. When in 1991 Gabb "acted" as honorary secretary of Tories for Ethical Sex (TOES), of which I was chairman, he was most unGabby. There was scarcely a peep out of him. Nor any other form of action. Naturally TOES turned up, leaving the poor Tories ethically unguided on questions of sex.

If only Gabb had done his stuff, D. Mellor might still be minister of fun.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS BENNION,

Oxford.

Lookalike

Butler

Palin

Sir,

I have just noticed the striking similarity between ex-Python star Michael Palin and Cabinet Secretary Sir Robin Butler.

Has Mr Palin been pursuing a parallel career in the civil service? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
RUSSELL MILNES

Ribchester, Lancs.

Critic

Sir,

Re Media News, EYE 814.
Derek Winnert reviews the week's films.
Barry Norman writes the column.
Pension-off your piss poor columnist.

Yours,
NEIL McDERMID
(A Barry Norman Fan),

Grangetown, Cardiff.

Zoo keeper

Sir,

I haven't actually managed to see any of "Zoo Time with Jonathan Ross", as I'm usually a bit busy on a Saturday night, but I do know that Simon Day and John Thomson are both very funny comedians and certainly do not need to pinch anyone else's material.

However, as one of the producers who had the privilege of working with the great Bob Hooverburg and Jackie Wissenschatz, as created by actors Paul Shearer and Richard Turner, I remember finding them very funny at the time, and, checking through my treasured archive of BSB tapes, still do. I guess that's why I put them on the show.

But then if you can't disagree with a less busy member of Jonathan Ross's production team every now and again, life would be dull indeed.

Stay gorgeous!
DAVID TYLER
(Sometime Producer
— Up Yer News),

London N8.

Red hot poker

Sir,

Continental Television B.V.i.o. owns and broadcasts Red Hot Dutch, the "porn" satellite channel.

We are a Dutch company.

I note that John Davey of the ITC states in his letter (EYE, 12 February), on the subject of the ITC licensed, Swedish channel TV1000 the following:

"The law does not permit the ITC to impose licensing controls on services which are provided from other countries."

Mr Davey has made many public representations to the UK government, asking them to intervene and ban Red Hot Dutch.

In the light of this statement, would Mr Davey kindly confirm that he is withdrawing his requests.

Or should I ask the police to arrest him, as, by his own admission, he is breaking the UK law?

Yours sincerely,
DAVID WALLER,

Chairman, Continental Television BVio, Hilversum, Holland.

Dark deeds

Sir,

There is no evidence Dahmer was a "racist". In hundreds of pages of "discovery" material, what we call statements not given in evidence, there is but one reference to an ex-army colleague having heard him refer to niggers. Joel Norris did not attend the trial, and apparently did not peek into the police files either. That's why he got it wrong. On the other hand, Dahmer was certainly "vicious", as my book amply demonstrates.

Yours truly,
BRIAN MASTERS.

Hunt balls

Sir,

Why do you continue to publicise cases brought against hunts? Were you once bitten by a hound perhaps? Or is it the usual anger you feel at all those "toffs" (usually farmers and tradespeople, in fact) sitting high and mighty on their horses in pursuit of the uneatable?

Either way, you are very quick to highlight violence against "antis" but not so quick, I notice, to publicise the damage you recently had to pay a gamekeeper for libelling him. Also, have you ever thought of the extremes that "antis" go to? I enclose cuttings from the British Field Sports Society magazine detailing the attack via letter bomb against the master of a hunt. I am surprised you don't begin a pro-IRA campaign as well, since they are terrorists, too.

The fact remains that huntsmen are engaged in a legal (and traditional) sport, and the "antis", like most of their kind, wish to impose their views through illegal means. Who is wrong here?

Perhaps you should take the trouble to learn a little about the countryside before trying to impose your views on your readership. Life is different from London there, strangely enough, yet you are one of (sadly) a growing number of urbanites who don't appear to realise it.

Yours sincerely,
TOM KNOWLES,

London SW3.

Smoke alarm

Sir,

In EYE 811 under Energy you comment adversely (again) on the 11 percent paid to Nuclear Electric for decommissioning.

Since the war the burning of fossil fuels has killed over 6,000 people in the UK during smogs alone, and is still killing many through bronchitis, asthma, and cancer.

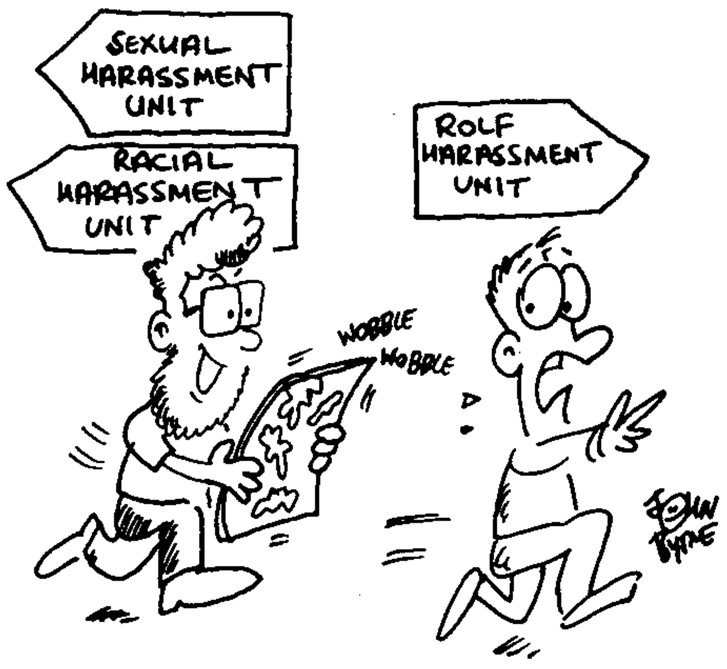
Also, fossil fuel burning is the main cause of both acid rain and the greenhouse gases.

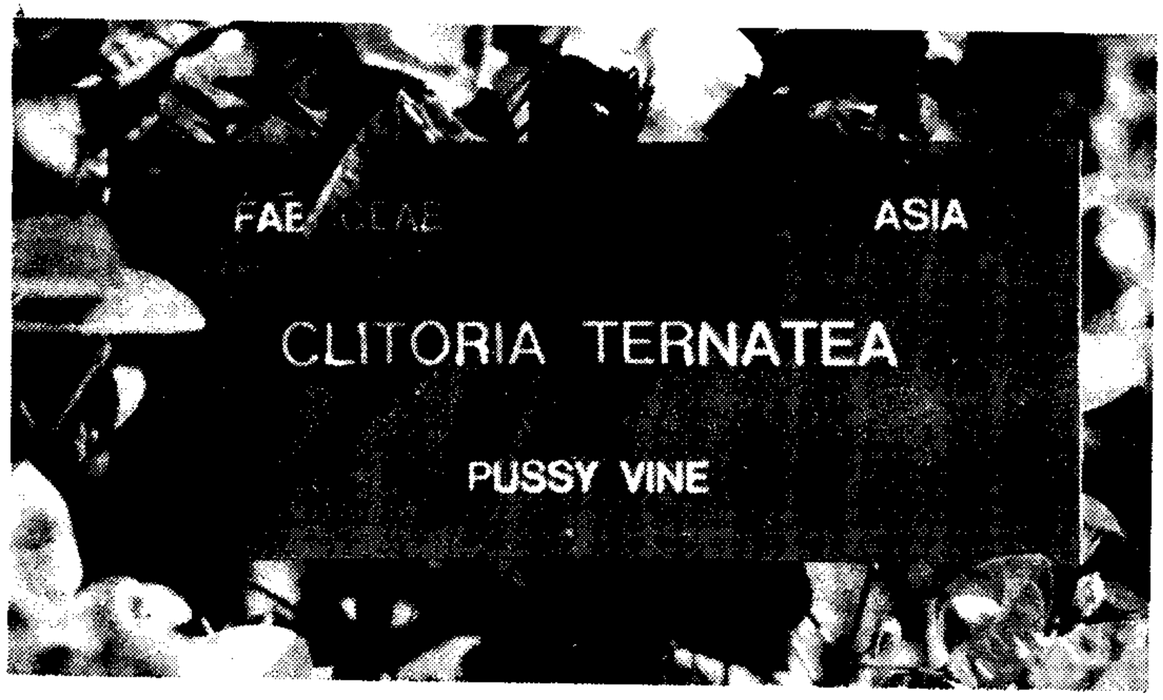
In contrast, nuclear energy may have killed a highly disputed 20, and has neither acid rain nor greenhouse complications.

An ideal energy policy would force coal, gas and oil to clean up their waste products down to the same level as the nuclear industry. Failing this a subsidy to nuclear power to counterbalance the cost of this double standard is only reasonable.

Yours sincerely,
G.E. HAINES,

Woodbridge, Suffolk.





I-SPY

Public gardens, Barbados

Submitted by Dr Kimon Roussopoulos. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Blow by blow football

Sir,

Excellent piece on Coventry City FC and Radio 5 (EYE *814). I often wondered why the local paper, the* COVENTRY EVENING TELEGRAPH, *kept running big articles on Coventry City. I always imagined that there was some vague geographical connection, but your revelation that the paper has shares in the club and was therefore doing it for pure financial gain has truly blown their gaffe. Well done for exposing such wicked corruption!*

On Radio 5's dire coverage of the Coventry v. Blackburn game, if the commentary was so wonderful perhaps you'd like to ask commentators Alan Green and Jim Beglin what actually they were talking about when Coventry scored their second goal? (It wasn't about what was happening on the pitch.) Or why they spent the last five minutes giggling? Very professional.

Incidentally, Richard Illfe, the "major shareholder" in the BBC's local competitor Mercia Sound, does not own the TELEGRAPH. *It's part of the Birmingham Post and Mail group Midland Independent Newspapers, chairman: Norman "Fall Guy" Fowler. Thought everyone knew that.*

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BENSON,

Earlsdon, Coventry.

Hit and myth

Sir,

Re the "parking space" incident quoted in True Stories (EYE *814).*

Nice story — but unfortunately a well-known urban myth. A similar scenario — called "Old versus Young" — is quoted in the 1986 book THE MEXICAN PET, *one of Jan Harold Brunvand's compilations of apocryphal stories. The incident also appears in a film,* FRIED GREEN TOMATOES.

Brunvand's version has the car occupants who steal the parking spot saying "We're younger and faster" while the driver who rams them replies "We're older and richer".

Faithfully,
RAY GIRVAN,

Hall Green, Birmingham.

Hedge row

Sir,

With reference to Down on the Farm and the government's hedgerow incentive schemes.

Will the farmers be given an additional subsidy to cultivate and maintain the hedges when grown? The present tendency is to prune hedges by power slashing them, so that in a few years the hedge becomes sparse and full of gaps.

A hedge needs to be "laid" and maintained by an experienced hedger, and will then last for a hundred years, given regular attention. Perhaps some of the unemployed might be trained in the craft, and thus find both health and work.

Yours cynically,
R.F. SONGHURST,

Sandling, Maidstone.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"It certainly has proved a bed of nails, and Sir James feels that it is time for a clean sheet."

DAVID DAVIES, BBC
(Patrick Bryan)

"Whatever the result tonight I think Reading will be the winners."

COMMENTATOR, BBC-1
(R.C. Forster)

"It was a terrible challenge. He had his legs decapitated."

COLIN GIBSON, BBC Radio Derby
(Maurice Cracknell)

"As I say, if we score more goals than them then we'll win."

KENNY DALGLISH, Radio 5
(Simon Jones)

Ron (phone-in caller): *I'm now retired. I was a music teacher.*
Henry Kelly: *What did you teach, Ron?*
Ron: *Music, Henry.*

Classic FM
(Andrew Read)

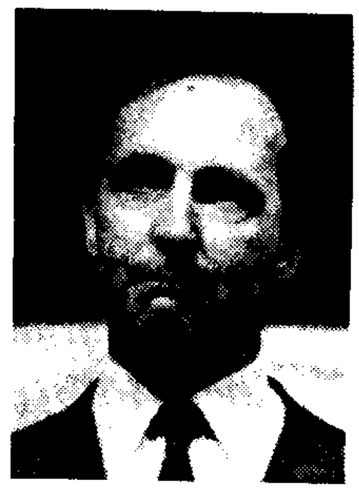
HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

IT'S YOUR DUTY AS A ROMAN CITIZEN TO PAY TAXES..
.. TO UPHOLD THE DIGNITY HONOUR AND GLORY OF ROME.
MAKE IT OUT TO 'CAESAR IMPERIAL HOLDINGS LTD.' I'M WORKING FREELANCE.
SPQR

Letter from

Australia



from Our Own Correspondent

IF JOHN SMITH and his hapless chums ever tire of trying to grab at Bill Clinton's coat tails, they could do worse than look to Australia for a new role model.

In this month's general election, our Labour party under Paul Keating will be seeking an unprecedented fifth consecutive term in office. Having ousted the paranoid, egocentric and now embittered Bob Hawke as leader in 1991, Keating wants a victory he can call his own.

Despite the prolonged recession, several factors run in his favour which John Smith would kill for. First, the successful accord with the unions has secured a decade of industrial peace and moderate wage rises. Second, his party is a mean election-fighting machine: in 1990 it retained power with just 39 per cent of the primary vote, doing so via ruthless targeting of marginal seats and the efficient harvesting of third party and environmental preferences. Third, the opposition Liberal party has fallen to free-market ideologues just as the rest of the world is saying good riddance to Thatcherism.

The campaign here bears a passing resemblance to the 1979 British election. Liberal leader John Hewson is a cold-eyed fanatic who swapped the exigencies of a strict Baptist upbringing for worship of the market while studying at Johns Hopkins University (Alan Walters was a professor there at the time). His policy package, *Fightback!*, calls for huge industrial reforms aimed at breaking the power of the unions, an assault on the public healthcare scheme, and tax cuts — the latter paid for by the privatisation of Telecom and a 15 per cent goods and services tax (GST). Labour's albatross is an unemployment figure of over one million. Sound familiar?

Nor does Hewson lack Mrs Thatcher's charm and compassion. He left his first wife (on Christmas Eve) because she couldn't stomach the public engagements he deemed necessary to oil his path to the top. Last year he berated New South Wales state Labour leader Bob Carr for being "abnormal" because he "doesn't have kids and doesn't drive". And he made his own fortune partly by minimising his personal tax to around 15 per cent through various tawdry schemes.

After launching *Fightback!* he pronounced himself "proud to be inflexible" and determined not to flinch from its unpalatable measures. "I don't care what the polls say," he protested. By December they were saying "loser" — and Hewson caved in, agreeing to exempt food from the GST. This flabby retreat, along with laughable attempts to humanise himself (like strolling on the beach with his socks on) is supposed to convince us that the Hewson who weeps for the unemployed and those on hospital waiting lists is not the same Hewson who once said that "reaching down to life's losers means pulling everybody else down".

But Keating remains unloved, too. As treasurer since 1983, he presided over the deregulation of the financial markets, which ended in tears and sometimes jail for erstwhile "mates" like Alan Bond. Despite unemployment of 11 per cent, a huge foreign debt and persistent current account deficit leaving his reputation for economic wizardry in tatters, his arrogance remains.

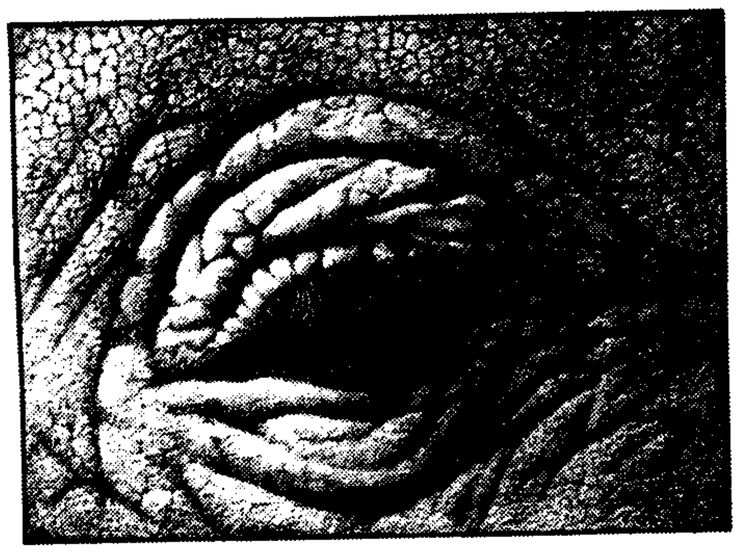
Hewson has been able to run his own "Labour isn't working" campaign, fatuously claiming that his plan to cut a swathe through the highly regulated wage bargaining system will "create two million jobs by the year 2000". It's more likely to create widespread industrial strife, as it is in Victoria where an even more gung-ho state Liberal government is bulldozing through its own version of his vision.

After a decade of rule by Hewson's ideological soulmates has left a trail destruction from New Zealand to Britain, Labour has plenty to hold up as a nightmarish vision of a Liberal future. Given the state of our economy, however, Hewson should walk it... exactly what they said about Neil Kinnock.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

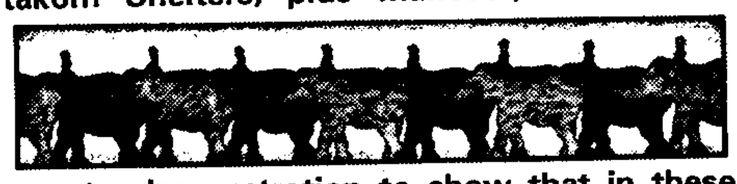
TAKEN short as the Brabham Moor Hunt was taking off, Penelope Middlebrook, the Mushroom Millionairess, dashed for the hedge, whipped down her jodhpurs, and was restoring herself for the saddle when her horse — whose reins she had wrapped around her wrist — bolted. "I regret to say," said a friend, "that Outdoor Penny was hurried, bottom bare, through a swathe of brambles. But she looked pretty good to me, and didn't turn a hair — so to speak."



Bert Kitchen

INTERVIEWED outside the Punnathur Kota Shelter, Mr T. Narayanan Tutty, the District Organiser of the Devaswom Elephant Workers United Front (South Kerala Branch), said: "The mahouts of Devaswom will not be bullied. Our Action Committee states: 'For the last 30 years the appointed walking distance for Elephant and Mahout has been fixed at 20km per day at 20Rs per day. Now the local Chamber of Commerce are insisting on 30km per day for 25Rs, and they have persuaded the sub-committee for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to declare that an elephant can have a daily walkable of 32km without any ill effects. There is going to be a protest march. 50 Elephants and 50 Mahouts.' "

A spokesman for the Chamber of Commerce said: "We are arranging for Ernakulam and Kottakom Shelters, plus mahouts, to make a



counter-demonstration to show that in these times of world-wide recession everyone must work harder for less."

SIPPING a cool beer in the transit lounge of Kisumu Airport, Mr A.W. Sambu, a Nairobi businessman, said: "It appears that I shall be here for two weeks. Our Kenya Airways flight to Berlin could not take off because as we boarded her the plane developed a flat tyre. The ground staff tried to reinflate it with a bicycle pump — but all in vain. I think it is disgraceful that our national carrier planes should operate without spare tyres."

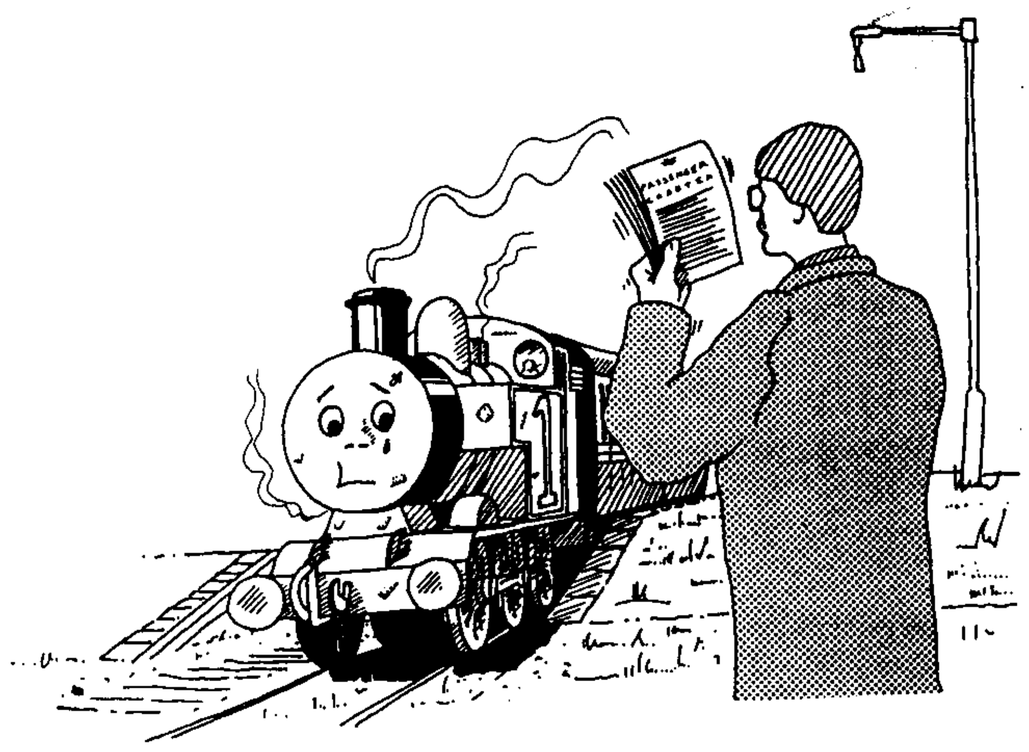
PLEADING guilty, Mr Chu Lo Hoi said: "We were in the karaoke lounge of the Manhattan Club when Mr Lau took the microphone and began to sing *My Way*. *My Way* is my favourite song. But Mr Lau's rendering was intolerable. A horrible noise. Quite disgusting. Finally I could stand it no more and I assaulted him. But I was not alone." Passing judgement, Magistrate Jackson said: "I am told that ten bar stools, six sofas, 40 glasses and two marble-topped tables were thrown about during this incident. So in spite of your hitherto impeccable character you will serve nine months suspended for 18."

INFORMATION: Yorkshire Post 9.2.93; India Express 16.1.93; Nairobi Standard 6.1.93; South China Morning Post 20.12.92. MONITORS: Clive L. Griggs, Henry Brownrigg, John Nixon, Simon Flynn.

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

Thomas and the Passenger's Charter



THERE has been trouble on Thomas's railway lately. Monday was Thomas's fortieth birthday. He woke up stiff after the weekend. "I've got arthritis in my valve-gear," he groaned. And all day he lost time because he was aching so.

On Tuesday the morning train was cancelled because the guard was off sick. "We can't afford to employ spare guards," said the Fat Controller.

On Wednesday Thomas was delayed because the Victorian signalling system was up the creek again.

On Thursday the fares were increased, reflecting "recognisable improvements to services" on Thomas's line.

On Friday Clarabel's brakes seized up, due to old age. "We can't afford to keep spare carriages," said the Fat Controller. The passengers were furious when they all had to pack into Annie like sardines. Waiting for the delayed guard, a group of angry passengers gathered round Thomas, demanding compensation and waving a pamphlet in his face.

On Saturday the Fat Controller brought the Grey Controller to Thomas's engine shed.

"I am very considerably annoyed with you, Thomas," said the Grey Controller, shaking his head and jabbing a finger at Thomas. "Your performance standards are very poor, oh yes."

"But it's not my fault," stammered Thomas. "Do you think I could have a twentieth-century signalling system? It is nearly the twenty-first century after all."

"Don't be cheeky, Thomas," said the Fat Controller sternly.

"Look at all these complaints." The Grey Controller waved a bundle of letters in Thomas's face. "You're going to cost the taxpayer thousands of pounds in Charter compensation."

"Well couldn't that money buy the new Thomas Turbo train, which has been on the drawing board for two years?"

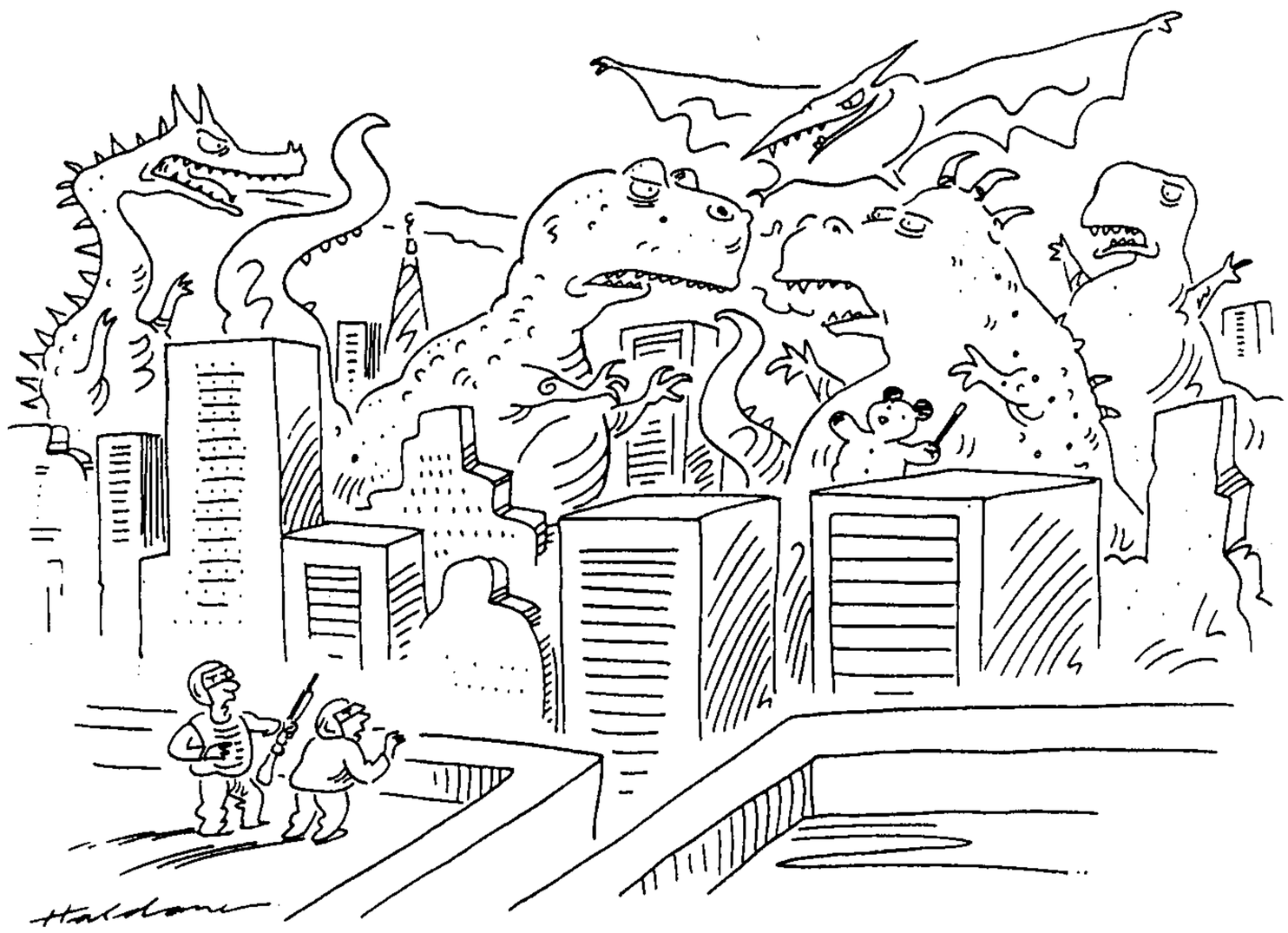
"Thomas!" shouted the Fat Controller.

"We're going to stem these losses, oh yes," said the Grey Controller. "We've carefully studied all the options."

The words sent a shiver down Thomas's boiler tubes. "You mean you're going to privatise me?"

"Oh no. We're going to close your branch line," said the Grey Controller, and walked away.

And Thomas began to cry.



"OK, we're sending in a SWAT team to get Sooty out of there"

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

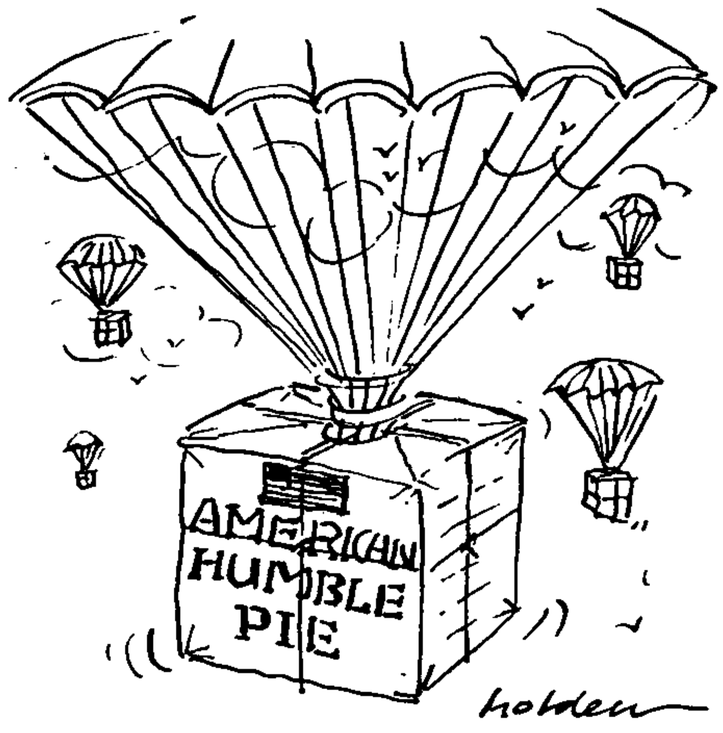
Monday

I am in America again! Talk about the jet-set. I am allowed to be the very first foreign leader to meet the new President, who is called Mrs Clinton. We had a very long and fruitful chat and I also met her husband briefly on my way out. Mr Hurd had given me a 2-point agenda, as follows:

1. I would not agree to support the American plan to drop food parcels into the snow.

2. The Americans would not agree to end the trade war.

The President and I agreed on both these issues, which in my judgement



shows that my negotiating skills have never been higher!

As Mr O'Donnell told the reporters afterwards: "Major is a man of steel, whatever evidence he may give to the contrary".

Mr Hurd had also told me that whatever I did I mustn't mention the fact that we had tried to smear Mr Clinton during his election campaign. I very carefully did not mention it, but it is only fair to say that Mr Clinton did bring it up, but only for about 50 minutes.

"What about our special relationship?" I asked him as I was being thrown out. "Can I say that it is still as important as ever?"

"You can say what the hell you like," was the quick reply. President Clinton is certainly a woman I can do business with.

Tuesday

On my return, I found the whole nation for some reason plunged into a state of gloom. All the papers seem agreed that the country is falling apart. At our Cabinet meeting today I told them that I had a three point plan to bring all this gloom dramatically to an end. "You mean, you're going to resign?" joked Mr Waldegrave, as he carried round the decaff and the Sainsbury's own-brand Victorian Assortment.

Nobody laughed, except quite a lot of people. I called them to order and told them about my 3-point Plan to get Britain moving (not that it isn't, oh no).

1. I am going to make a very important speech saying that, just because unemployment, bankruptcies and the budget deficit have all reached record levels, this is no reason to be gloomy.

2. A lot of new Charters will come on stream, to fight the gloom factor head-on. These will include our Gas Charter, the Red Star Charter, Prescription Charges Charter and a particular favourite of mine, the 999 Charter, which means that you can sue for up to £1 million if you are dead before the ambulance arrives.

3. This one will be filled in later by my special advisor, Mrs Hogg, who I don't think many people realise has thought up many of the ideas which have made my government the success it is.

Wednesday

Today, after I had given them time to think about it, I called my colleagues together to see what they had to say. First I asked Norma Lamont, who said: "I am afraid I cannot comment, prime minister, because I am in purdah."

I next turned to Mr Portfolio, who is going to be the next Chancellor when Mr Lamont is sacked, which of course he is not going to be, because I have complete confidence in him. But Mr Portfolio wasn't there. Nor, I noticed, was Mr Lilley.

I was in no small measure surprised to discover later that they had both been having lunch with the lady whose name I will never again mention, i.e. Mrs Thatcher. I was not inconsiderably annoyed at this and called them in to give a sustainable explanation for their behaviour.

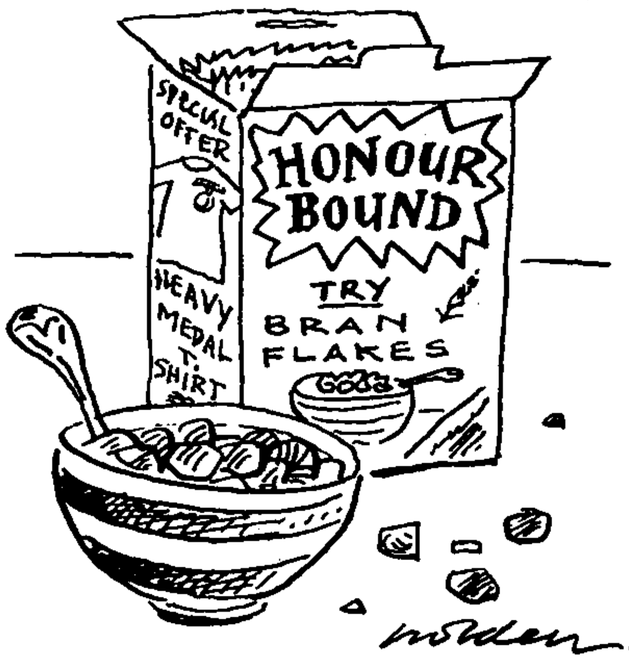
"We told her not to interfere, just because the government has made a mess of everything," said Mr Portfolio. Mr Lilley added: "We told her very firmly that she mustn't think about making a comeback just because you are so useless."

As I told Mrs Hogg later, I found their explanations very reassuring.

Thursday

I have had a letter from an Asian gentlemen, called Mr Rushdie, who seems to have problems with his fatwife. Even though he is supposed to be an author he misspelled this in his letter as fatwah. This shows how important it is for Mr Patten's education reforms to go through.

According to Mr O'Donnell, he is a



man without friends who lives in isolation and who has angered millions of people by his actions. "You should meet him," said my wife Norman. "You'll have a lot in common." This is untrue because I am not a great reader, as she well knows, except for my friend Jeffrey's excellent books which I take on holiday.

Friday

Today I have had yet another idea to dispel the gloom. As I said to my wife Norman over our Branflakes: "One must get to the root of the problem — and by that I mean the honours system."

At this point Norma spat out her flakes. Obviously she does not find the new cereal altogether to her liking! I went on to explain that the nation had long resented the fact that the BEM is given to "other ranks", while the more important honours like the MBE are reserved for people higher up the social scale. This is why I have decided on the biggest reform of the honours system for hundreds of years. From now on there will only be one honour — the CSM, the Classless Society Medal, which will be given to everyone, regardless of where they went to school or what their O Level grades had been.

Saturday

I have a very important interview with a newspaper, the Independent. A red-faced man called Mr Whittam-Smith asked me a number of what were in my judgement very personal questions, such as "Why is the country in such a mess?" "Well, Whittam," I replied. "I have said it before and I'll say it again — you have to remember that when I took over I inherited a not inconsiderable degree of economic chaos."

"But that was over a year ago," Whittam went on rudely.

"Well," I said, quick as a flash. "It's no surprise that it's got even worse."

Later Mr O'Donnell told me that I should not have blamed Mrs Thatcher. "I did not even mention her," I said. "I'm not stupid, you know."

Mr Lamont, who had just come in with his shopping, for some reason laughed so much that he dropped his plastic bag full of bottles.

NEW CLASSLESS HONOURS

Major's Dramatic Reform

IN what was a widely welcomed publicity stunt *(shurely 'Reform of the Honours System'? Ed)* **Mr John Major has introduced a new meritocratic approach to the awarding of all Honours:**

● It will no longer be possible to donate £200,000 to the Conservative Party in order to secure a knighthood. It will now cost £500,000.

● Peerages of the type bestowed on Lord Archhole will not be given to people who suck up to the Prime Minister for ten years. Now two years will be sufficient.

● And members of the public will be able to apply in person for the honour of their choice.

Here is the form for any *Eye* readers wishing to apply for the new democratic awards.

Honours Application Form

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Honour Wanted.....

(state clearly whether BEM, NBG, OBN, ERM, GCSE, etc)

I enclose a cheque for the sum of £.....

Access/Visa accepted

For full rates apply to Honoursforce, c/o The Post Office.

STOP PRESS

POETRY CORNER

So. Farewell
Then
Nicholas Ridley

Of NIMBY
Fame.

Where will
You be buried?

Not in my
Back yard.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

UZ
BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ
NEE MORE PUURLUR FER ME! ROGERIN RON'S GORRA NEW PLAYER NOW! I CANNAE PLAY ON ME UURN!
I'M ONE OF MAJOR'S PERLIAMO
HRH
ACCORDIN' TA FRIDGIE-SQUIDGY AAL HER MEN END UP PLAYIN' WI' THEMSELVES! FNARR!
wicKiD!
SPEND A BIT MORE TIME WI' YER BAIRNS, PET. WE DIVVENT WANT 'EM GROWIN' UP TA BE LAYABOUTS!
XXX
HRH
I'M THRONE ALONE!
HOY! AH NIVVA SPENT NAE TIME WI' MAH BAIRNS AN' THEY TURNED OOT AAL RIGHT!
IN NEPAL..
TURN THAT SHITE OFF! I WANT A PROPER SONG OR I'LL BE SICK!
BUT MUTHA SAYS WE'RE NOT TO PLAY HER THEME TUNE FOR YOU..
SEE NEPAL AND DI
LA LA... GOD SAVE THE FUTURE QUEEN... LA.. LA..
No 14
EE! FUNNY SHE SHOULD GO FOR GILBEYS TOO!
WHISKY
RACING
GIN

Glenda Slagg to join Today!

TOP FLEET Street columnist Glenda Slagg has left the Daily Mirror in order to join Today. The world's top female commentator on current events, whose brash and forthright style has made her the most widely read and respected journalist in the world starts on this paper today!

Now read for yourself the hard-hitting views of the woman the Mirror couldn't tame! Here's what she says:

☐ **THE MIRROR?! Don'tchahateit?! With its new fat editor and its bootboy management style?!? How different from when I worked there happily with Bob Maxwell and his merry gang!?!?**

☐ TODAY?! Don'tchajustluvit?!? I salute the fastest-growing tabloid since the old Daily Mirror when I worked there under Robert Maxwell?!?!

☐ *HATS OFF to Rupert Murdoch!! OK, so he hates everything I stand for?!? But he pays a fortune!!!?!*

☐ THREE cheers for the Tories?!?! It takes a big-hearted gal to say "I was wrong"

and an even bigger one to say "Yes, please give us the money"?!?!

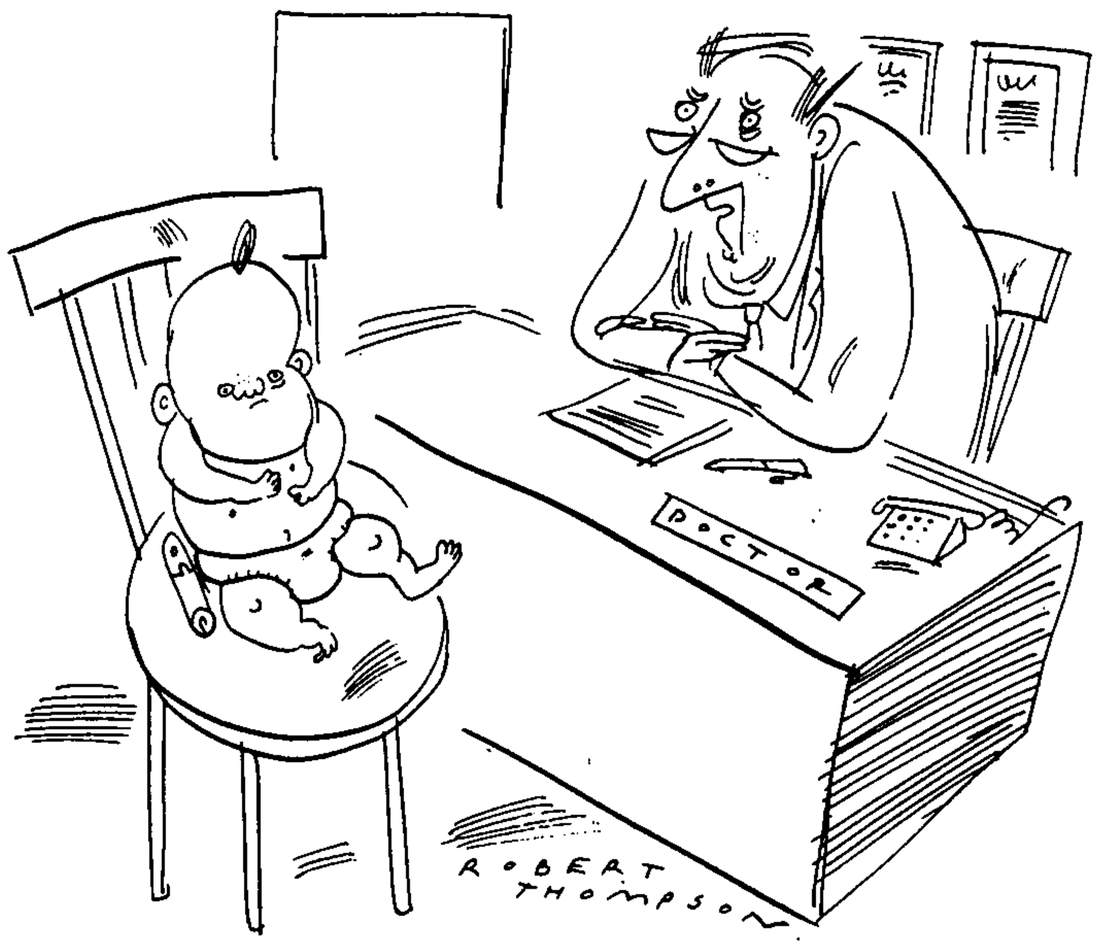
☐ ***HERE they are — Glenda's Men of Today (Geddit?)?!?!***

Richard Stott — He's the most brilliant editor ever?!?

Rupert Murdoch — What a handsome man!?! And what a great proprietor?!!

Richard Stott — ***(You've had him. Ed.** Not yet, I haven't! G.)*

Don't Byeeee the Mirror!!!!



"I'm afraid you only have 80 years to live"

ENGLAND IN NEW INDIAN MISSILE ROW

by Our Man Who's Just Eaten Prawn Surprise **Brian on-the-Johnners**

ENGLAND'S cricket management lashed out yesterday at the intolerable conditions of playing in India during the current tour.

"Our lads have been bombarded with objects hurled by Indians with the express intention of intimidating them," said England selector Ted Dexter, from his hotel room in Barbados.

The players agreed and Graham Gooch produced as evidence a small red leather spherical object which had been repeatedly hurled at him during his innings.

"I have to put up with this sort of thing up to six times an over — and the umpires do nothing about it. They allow some Indian to run up to the wicket and throw this thing straight at me. How am I meant to bat? It's just not cricket."

Alec Stewart, England's deputy captain, was more circumspect.

"I don't know exactly what it was they were chucking at me because I never saw it but whatever it was it was thrown with such a force that it smashed my stumps out of the ground."

England are 31 for 7.

That Thatcher secret lunch menu in full

Paté and Disloyal Toast

— ❋ —

Melon with Portillo

— ❋ —

Consumé de Hate (with Brown-Nose Rolls)

— ❋ —

Grilled Lilley Liver and Save Your Bacon

— ❋ —

Baroness of Beef (soaked in whisky)
with
Lady's Two Fingers, Brussels (off)
and
Potatoes Not-in-their-Jacquet-de-Lors

— ❋ —

Welsh Tebbit

— ❋ —

Ex-Cabinet Pudding

— ❋ —

Chesham Street Cheese
Sour Grapes

— ❋ —

To Drink
Cabinet Sauvequipeut (Dry)
Still Walters

— ❋ —

● **The scene is an echo of the Hollywood star's big tease in her hit murder movie Basic Instinct, in which she was grilled by police wearing no knickers.**

Daily Mirror

2.50 —BLACKDOWN H'CAP HURDLE 2m 4f 110y Winner £3,080 (8 run)

1 0246U4- **DECIDED (Can) (377)** R Lee 10 12 0 (Gd, Sft) — —
Useful over hurdles and fences but clearly difficult to train nowadays
2 011644 **DERAB (USA) (19)** (B) S Sherwood 7 11 11 (Gd, Sft, D) *D Geoghegan 34
Every chance until weakened 2 out Newbury 3m ½f, 16¾l 4th to Simpson
3 235P64 **MISTER MAJOR (6)** G Balding 5 10 10 (Gd) A Maguire 31
Not one to trust. Disappointing 7l 4th to Yellow Spring at Kempton 2m 5f

Daily Mirror

POETRY CORNER

Lines On The Appointment Of Mr Alan Yentob As Head Of BBC1

So. Alan
Yentob.
You are to be
Head of
BBC1.

You used
To be
Head of
BBC2.

Yentob.
Spelt backwards
It is
Botney.

A strange
Name, either
Way.

J.E. Bbirht (aged 71¾)

"With the dissent in the control room, we did bring in union representation from the operational crews. However, there are 39 crews on duty during the day, and it represented one operations person being deployed per shit. This temporary measure is due to end next week."

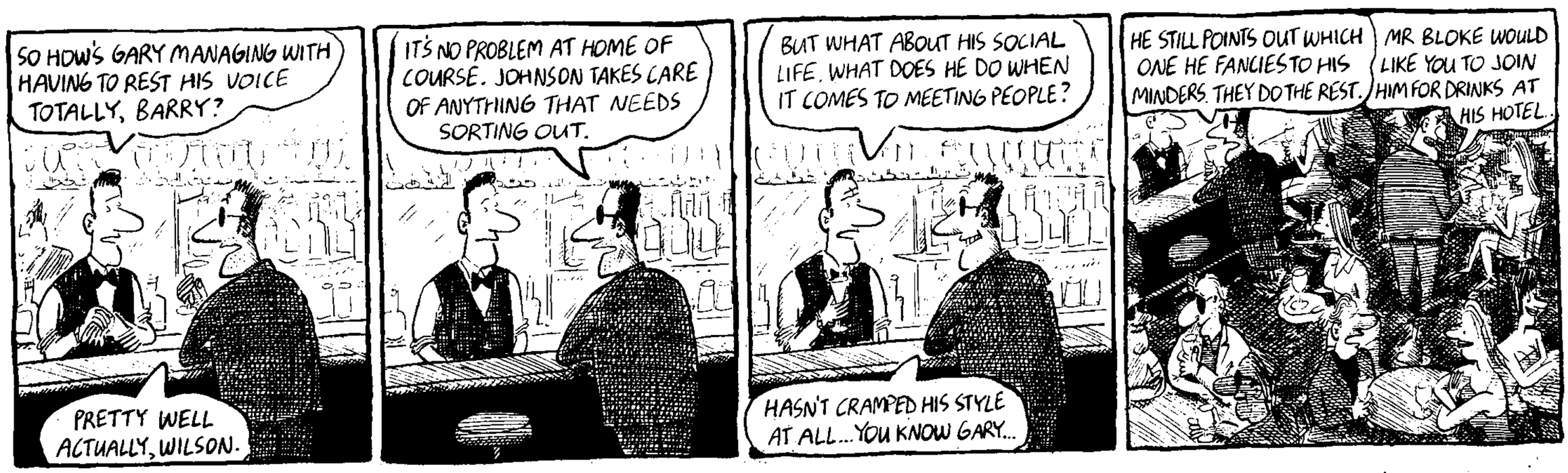
Leatherhead Advertiser

Great Bores Of Today.

"... I think individuals must take some responsibility for their actions things were much worse in the 'thirties but you didn't get this type of vicious crime then people knew the difference between right and wrong and if you stepped out of line you'd get six of the best from your old man's belt and that would make you think twice and if you saw a copper you'd run for it people respected authority then but not now the family has failed the church has failed it's all very well going on about poverty and deprivation and all that and some of these estates are terrible they're almost no-go areas the parents are out of work and down the betting shop and the kids are sitting around watching violent videos and television no wonder some of them turn to crime what else is there for them to do? personally I feel Mrs Thatcher is to blame though I think individuals must take some responsibility for their actions..."

Celeb

LIGGER


SO HOW'S GARY MANAGING WITH HAVING TO REST HIS VOICE TOTALLY, BARRY?
PRETTY WELL ACTUALLY, WILSON.
IT'S NO PROBLEM AT HOME OF COURSE. JOHNSON TAKES CARE OF ANYTHING THAT NEEDS SORTING OUT.
BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS SOCIAL LIFE. WHAT DOES HE DO WHEN IT COMES TO MEETING PEOPLE?
HASN'T CRAMPED HIS STYLE AT ALL... YOU KNOW GARY...
HE STILL POINTS OUT WHICH ONE HE FANCIES TO HIS MINDERS. THEY DO THE REST.
MR BLOKE WOULD LIKE YOU TO JOIN HIM FOR DRINKS AT HIS HOTEL.

'MESSIAH' HOLED UP IN US SIEGE

by Our Man In Texas **W.A.C. O'Booze**

THE self-styled "saviour of the world", Mr William Jefferson Airplane III, was today still holding out in his White House compound after six weeks during which he has defied all forces of sanity.

"President" Airplane, as he is known to his dwindling band of followers (Ms Hillary Roddam Airplane), was born plain Bill Clinton in Hopeless, Arkansas.

It was early in 1992 that he launched his way-out sect, the Clintonites, based on the belief that the only thing that matters in this world is getting into the White House.

Despite accusations of sexual irregularity levelled against the cult's leader, believers flocked to join the man who proclaimed himself as the New Messiah who would save America.

Complete Messiah

His speeches mesmerised acolytes with such phrases as "Ask not what you can do for your country — ask what you can do for me" and "Ich bin ein sax maniac."

But, six weeks ago, Airplane finally went too far. Taking refuge in the Oval Office, he proclaimed himself "the most powerful individual on God's earth" and appointed his wife to tell him what to do.

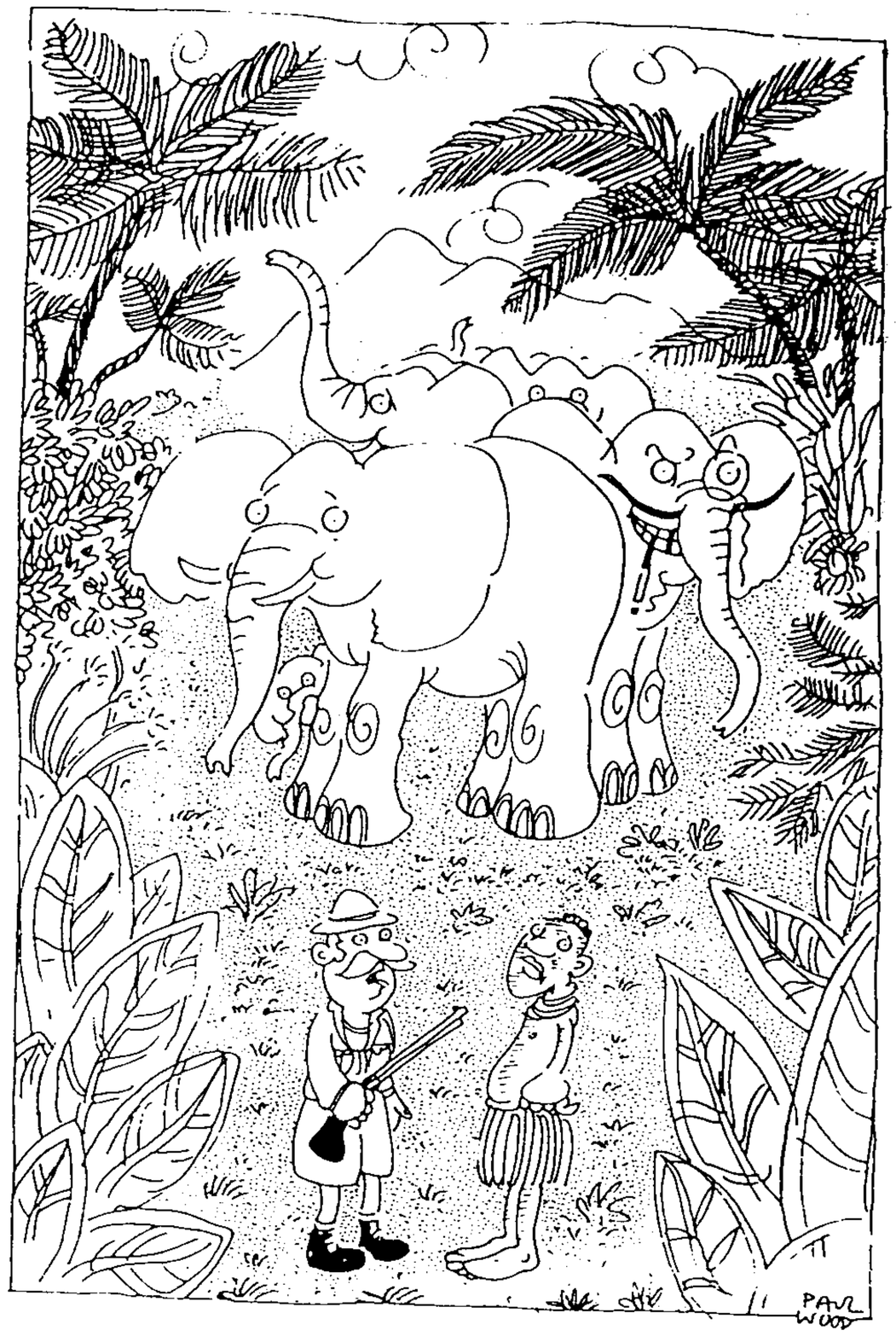
But it was when he surrounded himself with a "gay" army that the patience of middle America finally ran out.

His "White House" headquarters was besieged as the increasingly crazed leader began to shoot himself repeatedly in the foot.

He demanded access to the media, and made a series of incoherent speeches to the nation, rambling on about the sacrifices his fellow Americans would all have to make to keep him in office.

STOP PRESS

Last night it was revealed that a number of Britons had fallen under the Airplane spell. They were named as Margaret Beckett, 51, Tony Blair, 23, and "John Smith", 56. It is believed that all three had travelled to America, lured by the promises of a miracle that would give them supreme power when they returned home to Britain.



"Right, Matumbi, where's this rogue elephant?"

"Doris, do we have an ant problem?"

THE INVISIBLE MAN

starring John Smith

An extraordinary story about a man who becomes invisible after an experiment in choosing a new leader goes horribly wrong. Amazing special effects include John Smith fuming at the fact that no-one listens to him.

Co-starring Tony Blair as The All Too Visible Man and Roy Hattersley as The Risible Man. *(That's enough Men — Ed.)*

Le Darling Buds of Mayle

(par Mayles Kington)

(Silly French accordion music)

INSPECTOR MORSE *(pour c'est lui):* Ah, ici nous sommes in Provence. Ah, le food! Le vin! Le brandy! Et les tres amusants French locals, avec ses mosutaches et le fameux beret!

SGT LEWIS: Sir, I do not understand what you are on about. Ou est le body dans cet case?

POIROT: Ah, zere you 'ave me, 'astings. *(Surely quelque erreur? Ed.)*

1st FRENCH PERSON: 'Allo, 'allo — I shall say zees only once.

EVERYONE: Non, you won't — you 'ave to spin it out for 12 episodes.

MORSE: Ah, ca c'est la true mystere! 'Own can zees tres thin libre be strung out comme les oignons sur la bicyclette?

FAT POLICE CHIEF: Morse, I want de vous voir in mon office immediatement. You are charged with impersonating a retired advertising executive. Comment pleadez-vous?

MORSE: J'ai besoin de la monnaire.

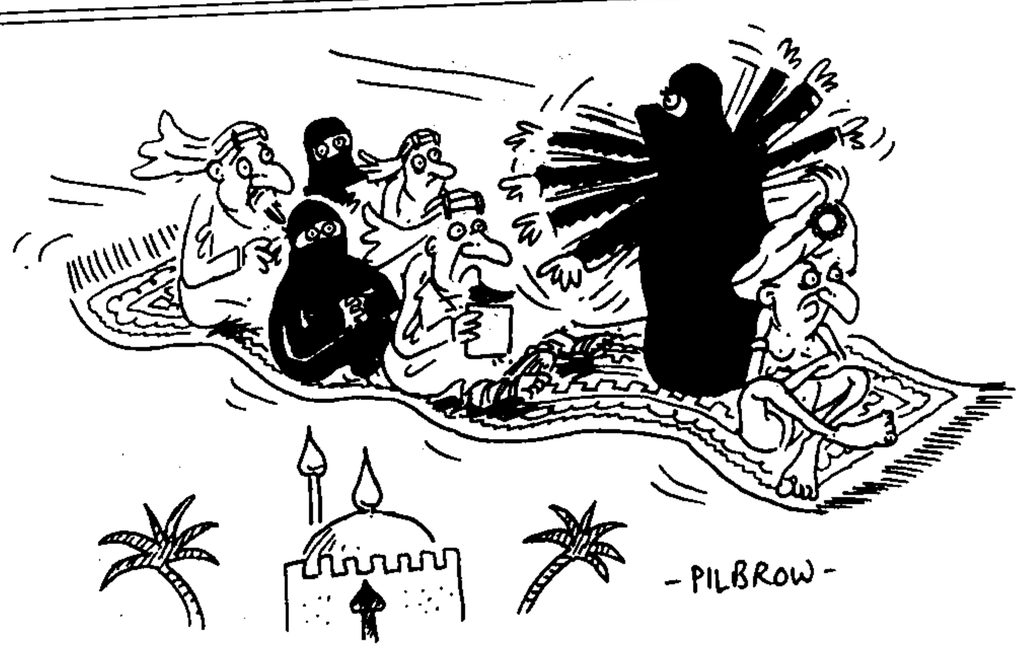
SGT LEWIS: Rubbish, sir.

MADAME MAYLE: Ha, ha, ha.

(More silly accordion music. Loving shots of Provençal countryside)

CREDITS

None, except Rostrum Cameraman Inspector Ken Morse



"The emergency exits are located here, here, here, here, here..."

INDUSTRIAL TERRORISM HITS BRITAIN

by Our Crime Staff **Nick Cross**

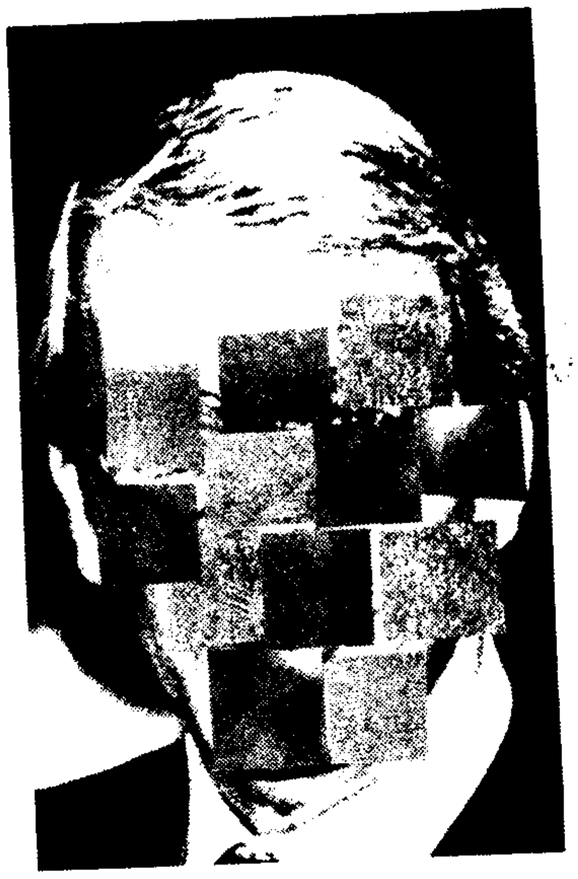
THE GAS industry is only the latest target of the so-called "campaign of destruction" aimed at bringing the country to its knees.

A shadowy group operating from somewhere in London is believed to be behind this and other attacks on traditional industries.

Led by a man known only as "The Major", this cell of fanatics have decided that they no longer care about loss of livelihood and believe that it is "worth the cost" in what they call "the war against inflation".

Provisional DTI

Other victims of this cynical campaign have included ICI, British Aerospace, DAF, British Coal, British Rail and British Manufacturing.



Enhanced video picture of the man believed to be behind the current wave.

A spokesman for the group said in a communiqué: "We will not stop until Britain has withdrawn all its industry from the mainland of the UK."

Officials warned the public to be on guard at all times, especially for specious packages marked "P45". One cautioned citizens everywhere: "These boys mean business. Or rather they don't."

The PETER McLIE *Column*

NO ONE talks much about crime anymore, have you noticed? Yet in the street where I live there is at least one break-in every year. I am told that it is usually the elderly who are to blame. You'd think our Home Secretary Alan Clarke would pull his finger out and do something. But no, the powers that be are determined to keep quiet on this one.

☐ **LORD King has done a grand job on British Airways, don't you agree? I say he deserves a peerage for his sterling work on bringing down airfares across the Atlantic. Unlike his competitors. No wonder BA is rightly called "The World's Most Fabulous Airline"!**

☐ *MY friend Andrew Wilson has bought a new pair of trousers to celebrate the Princess of Wales's visit to Nepal. They look fine and dandy to be sure — but I wonder what the Nepalese would make of them? Trousers are almost unknown in that remote part of the world — even the Gurkhas wear only kilts just like we do in Aberdeen. Which begs the vital question — has Andrew got anything on under his trousers? Only my little joke, Andrew.* (You're fired — Ed.)

☐ **HAVE you seen the new TV programme** *Inspector Morse*? **At last there is something good to watch on the goggle box! I predict many more of this excellent series — particularly now that actor John Thaw is such a hit in** *A Year in Provence*.

☐ HAVE you seen these new miniature clocks that fit neatly on the wrist? I am told they are called "watches" and are entirely portable. You can tell the time to the nearest minute simply by looking at them! Incredible, isn't it, what people will think of to turn an honest baubee?! Isn't life grand?! *(You're hired — Ed., Sunday Times)*

BIRT TO JOIN BBC

by Our Media Staff **Jeremy Taxman**

A FREELANCE TV producer, John Birt, 48, is to join the staff of the BBC, much to the surprise of himself.

Birt, who had previously been "helping out" the BBC as a full-time Director General, said: "There is nothing dishonest or underhand about my previous tax arrangements, which is why, now I have been caught out, I am changing them immediately."

Mr Birt's employer, Sir Marmalade Gussett, said: "We are delighted to have Mr Birt on the team. He has a first-rate tax accountant *(shurely 'mind'? Ed)* and will make a valuable contribution to the Inland Revenue *(shurely 'programming standards'? Ed)*.

THAT BIRT TAX RETURN IN FULL

1. Name Of Company	John Birt Management & Consultancy Services Ltd
2. Company Address	214 Eldorado Crescent, London SE94
3. Directors' Full Names	John Complete Birt Emmie-Lou Birt (wife) Marmaduke Birt (dog)
4. Purpose of Company	(i) To furnish, develop and otherwise provide consultancy, administrative and resource management services in the audio-visual field. (ii) To avoid tax.
5. Total Revenue 1991/2	£486,212.04 (paid on "Marmgus No. 1" Account, Cayman Islands Bank, per pro The British Broadcasting Corporation.
6. Total Expenses 1991/2	£486,212.06

Breakdown of non-taxable outgoings and allowances

Secretarial help (Mrs E-L. Birt)	£47,413
Dogfood (M. Birt)	£5,414
Silly glasses	£46,415
Imported suits	£5,449
Mr Birt's hairdressing	£17,450
Aromatherapy	£3,451
Bereavement counselling (Eldorado)	£4,453
Pizza-to-go	£11,456
Paper clips	£51,459
Satellite TV installation (Sky)	£61,466
Phone calls to Mr Murdoch	£26,467
1 copy "How To Make Friends & Influence People" (with introduction by Sir D. Frost)	£4,482
Financial advice (P. Jay)	£13,488
Dental floss	£26,491
Rostrum Camera (Ken Morse)	£54,503
Mortgage repayments	£41,537
Sundry freebies	£212,595

I Certify That The Above Constitutes A True And Faithful Account Of The Expenses Incurred By The Company In Its Efforts To Minimise Its Tax Liability.

Signed
Marmaduke Hussy

M. HUSSEY
pp Board of Governors

"I've got compassion fatigue — I've given a damn, a fig and two hoots already"

CLINTON BOMBS SERBS

by Our Defence Staff **Stormin' Norman Stone and Lunchtime O'Bosnia**

RESPONDING to world pressure, President Clinton yesterday launched an all-out air assault on Bosnia.

Two packets of Campbell's Soup were dropped by the space shuttle Toadthrush from a height of 500 miles above the earth's surface.

"This will show that we mean business," said President Airplane from his World War 3-style "Command Bunker" as, using the latest laser technology, the Toadthrush payload landed in a field in Wales, partially stunning a number of innocent voles.

Speaking from behind the safety of his wife, the President acknowledged that the voles may not have been Serbs. "But what the hell," he went on. "It shows these voles who is boss. Or who is Bosnian."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

The moral crisis facing the nation

From Lord Kray and Others

Sir, Like many of your readers, my brother and I have been appalled in recent days to witness the shocking catalogue of crimes by young persons reported in your pages.

Not a day goes by without some new instance of juvenile violence and delinquency perpetrated by minors against the elderly, the innocent and the defenceless.

There was a time when criminals could be relied upon to act in accordance with a strict code of ethics, when going about their unlawful business. Even when engaged in murder or armed robbery (GBH as we knew it in those more spacious days!), your average felon exercised a discipline and restraint which, it seems, is wholly unknown to the hooligans of today.

We recall only too vividly, in the famous Bull and Bush slash 'n' shoot-out of 1962, how the multiple-killing of "Razor" Gebler-Davies, "Jelly" Montgomery-Masingberd and "Scarface" Whittam-Smith was carried out with an efficiency and decorum which would not have been out of place in the Brigade of Guards.

Even the judge, during the celebrated nine-month Old Bailey trial which followed, paid tribute to the methods employed by my members when he sentenced my brother and I to life imprisonment.

O tempora, O mores!

Your humble and obedient servants,
LORD REGINALD KRAY
(pp Ron and Charlie),
Prisoner Number 949494,
A Wing,
Parkhurst, IOW

From Rt Rev J.C. Flannel, Archdeacon of Neasden

Sir, You know it is easy in today's climate of hysteria over so-called juvenile crime to try to find "someone to blame". But, you know, merely pointing the finger at the parents or the criminals themselves helps no one. How much more valid it might be if we were to look beyond the immediate "crimes" which hit the headlines, to the social conditions which have brought them about. When you consider unemployment, inadequate housing, the under-funding of social services, the steady erosion of the welfare state, the emphasis on entrepreneurial capitalism with its "me first" ethic — then is it not clear that the real crime can be laid at the door of ~~Mrs Thatcher~~ John Major.

Yours faithfully,
J.C. FLANGOOD,
YORK.

From the Archbishop of York, the Very Rev J.C. Hapless

Sir, I wish to protest in the strongest possible terms at the way my views have been distorted by the media by the cynical exercise of printing the above letter. I must complain about the printing of that letter, and indeed this one.

Yours faithfully,
J.C. NOGOOD,
Terry's Own Goal,
York.

From Mr W.F. Deedes ("Oldtimer" of the Morning Post)

Sir, Talk of "social conditions" by the Archbishop of York and others will not wash down in this neck of the woods.

For those of us who lived through the Thirties, the so-called link between unemployment and crime is so much tommyrot. As a young cub reporter in 1931, I vividly recall visiting one of the most notorious depressed areas in the country. I walked the length and breadth of the Gorbals, where it was not uncommon to find people living 20 to a room, often without a television. But I can assure you that if you happened to drop a gold sovereign in the street, it would not be long before a cheery ragamuffin would hand it back to you with a cheery smile on his grubby face, and a cheeky cry of "Lor' bless you guv'nor".

Yours sincerely,
LORD DEEDESH OF ALDINGTON,
Kent.

From Professor Gunna Blomqvist

Sir, There is nothing new about everything that is happening today. May I remind your readers of the celebrated passage in the 13th century *Gesta Britorum*, written by the monkish chronicler St Ivel of Cornwall.

"Ye young persons of todaye are an ungodly crewe, I witte. They liketh onlie to joyride, as they call it, and to belabour the elder folke of the villages with staves. Licentiousness aboundeth. I blame ye parents and ye clerkes in holie orders. They have faileth to instruct ye younge in ye difference between goode and eville. As ye pagan poetes quoth 'O tempera, O mores'."

Yours obediently,
PROFESSOR HALMAR SCREWLOOSE,
The New University of North Circular (formerly Neasden Polytechnic)

From Ms Fay Weldon

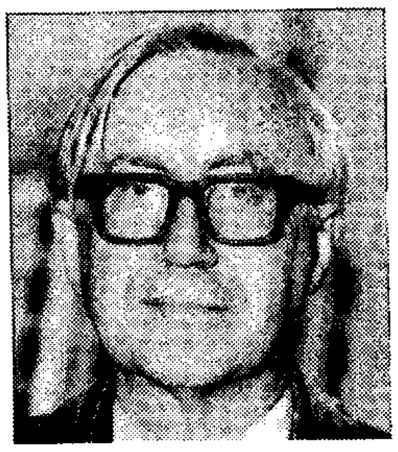
Sir, Today we mourn. We mourn and we grieve. And we mourn. Bobby is dead. And our innocence dies with him. The sheets of Liverpool are awash with our tears. Our tears. Tears of grieving. Because our cities are in chaos. Our morality is in tatters. Our Monarchy is in retreat. And Rushdie is in exile. No wonder we mourn. We mourn the death of the rainforests. We grieve over the whale. Comfort ye my people, as the prophet Salman so rightly said in his masterpiece. And what about the Whips forcing MPs to vote against their consciences in the Maastricht debate? No wonder we mourn. No wonder we grieve.

MORGANA LE FAY WELDON,
Great Drivel,
Glastonbury.

TV

Both Feet in the Grave

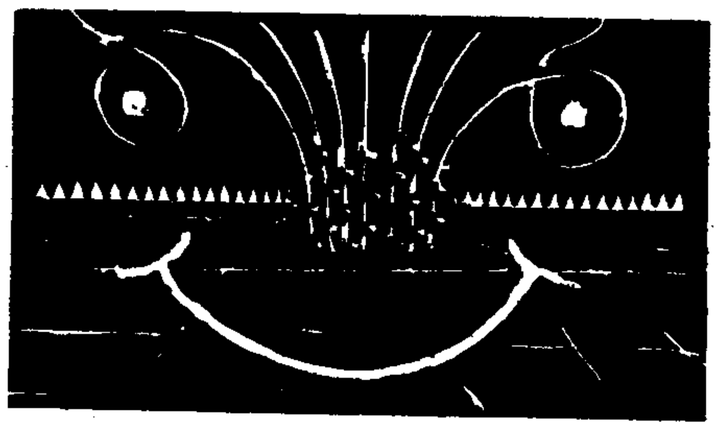
(Various Times)



William Rees-Mogg, the nation's favourite misery guts, is back in a hilarious new series of articles! William rants and raves about the 20th Century, the strength of the Deutschmark and the need for a return to spirituality before the forthcoming end of the world.

Victor Rees-Meldrew Richard Wilson
Lady Rees-Meldrew Annette Crosbie
TV's Charles Moore
TV's Angus Deayton

DIARY



JULIE BURCHILL

Phew — what a bloody relief!

A week's gone by without a word from so-called Prince Wills. Not forgetting that tiny-teeto-tal-four-foot-zero-inches twerp Prince Harry.

What a pair! What a paltry, po-faced, perpetually photo-opportunising, pansyish, poxyish pair!

To look at them, you might think that half a pound of Anchor wouldn't melt in their mealy mouths. But frankly you'd be R-O-N-G. No — you can't come the innocents with me, you little shorts-wearing, side-partinged, sandal-sporting, scummy little schemers.

From the start, Harry and Wills have been up to their necks in this scandal.

And you can't tell me they ain't.

Whoah! When the English Royal Family finally disappears down the plughole to join the Bay City Rollers and Wayne Fontana in Oblivion City, it's those piss-awful Princes Harry and Wills the finger will be pointing at.

Have you ever noticed how their eyes are too close together?

Yet those sycophantic and slimy schoolboy Cyclopses ponce about as if they were God's own gift to womanhood.

Well, let's spell it out so they can hear: frankly, I'd rather go on a blind date with a used teabag than find myself in the cot with Harry or Wills.

So put that in your By Appointment pipes and smoke it, schoolboys.

Bosnia, Schmosnia.

You-go-slav — I'll follow.

Frankly, those Bosnians make Madonna look like Morrisey after he's listened to an all-night session by The Shamen — and that's saying something!

England's a bloody brilliant place to live in compared to Yugoslavia. We've got Princess Di. The Groucho. Nintendo. And Me.

So why does everyone go on about Yugoslavia as if it was some kind of really great TV show like The Generation Game used to be before the piss-awful Larry Grayson, a kind of rich man's Vaclav Havel, took over?

And not content with yak-yakking about the Yucky Yugos for as long as the average Pink Floyd Concept Album — yawnsville! — now we're going to send them bloody Aid!

What I say is: why not send them Aids instead and be done with it!

Or if we've got to parachute parcels on the Batey Bosnians, let's make sure we wrap Harry and Wills up in 'em first!

Now there's a thought!

So bloody what if some bloke's goin' round cutting the dongs off gee-gees?

Good for him!

What have horses ever done for civilisation? That's what I'd like to know. Where's the great gee-gee novelist? The great gee-gee philosopher? And no horse I can think of has its own million-pound column on a mass-market Sunday newspaper.

All they've given us in the entire history of civilisation is the Horse of the Year Show — talk about instant switch-off — and 'Flipper'.

And Flipper wasn't even a horse. He was a bloody Dolphin.

But the English have always been soft on horses. Pathetic, really, when you think that a dobbin is only a sort of mis-shapen dog with a big nose, a neigh and more fleas.

And, talking of dogs, they get in the way, too.

Personally, I'd like to de-dong all dogs, fry all goldfish, Kastrate all Kitties and eat every last bloody horse in the country between two slices of bread. And as for cuddly little hamsters, can't they find anything better to do than run around wheels all day? Frankly, I'd like to send them all to Kelloggs and have them made into Hammy Pop-Tarts.

And as for dolphins — if they're so good at talking, then you name me a single dolphin *anywhere in the world* with his own chatshow. You can't?

'Nuff said.

So what's so bad about serial-killers?

From the way the poncey, pass-the-Petrus, Puccini-playing Hampstead Unintelligentsia are bleating on about it, you'd think there was something wrong — daahling — about clocking up more homicides than Mick Jagger has had hot dinners.

So these lily-livered, limp-wristed, Lorca-loving lettuce-heads gather in their swanky swagged-and-ruched sitting-rooms served by a smorgasbord of Sicilian servants to tut-a-tut-tut to one another about how SIMPLY AWWWFUL it was of Jeff Dahmer and Dirty Den Nilsen to kiss-'n'-kill.

Pardon me while I puke.

At least Jeff 'n' Den never bored us with their *South Bank Shows* and their piss-poor Booker-shortlisted state-of-Britain novels and their *Late Show* yawnathons.

At least they never grew manky moustaches like so-called President Vacant Havel.

At least they never received Brit Awards.

And at least they never sipped Pina Coladas with Mick Hucknall at Stringfellows.

So let's get this straight, shall we?

If it isn't "Dahmer for President" in 1996, then the United States of Amoronica will be shown as even more pathetic than I thought it was already.

And if the Tories are looking for a tough, single-minded successor to Mr Un-Major, there's only one thing for it.

Vote Nilsen.

Suddenly the whole world seems to be talking about just one subject.

ME.

Makes you think, eh?

What an amazingly brill achievement! You know one thing? I'm the first working-class girly in the history of the whole bloody universe to have her own highly paid — we're talking ***billions*** a year — column on a mega-brill paper. Except for Lynda Lee-Potter, that is. And Jean Rook. And Marje Proops, and — oh, anyway, I'm the only person in the history of England who's been able to make zillions out of mega-great, supa-brill schlockbusters, full of sex, drugs and slavery and at the same time write full-length serious novels what show just how intelligent and artistic I is.

Just like what that mega-groovy grandad Graham Greene did.

So when's my full-length serious novel coming out?

When I've written it!

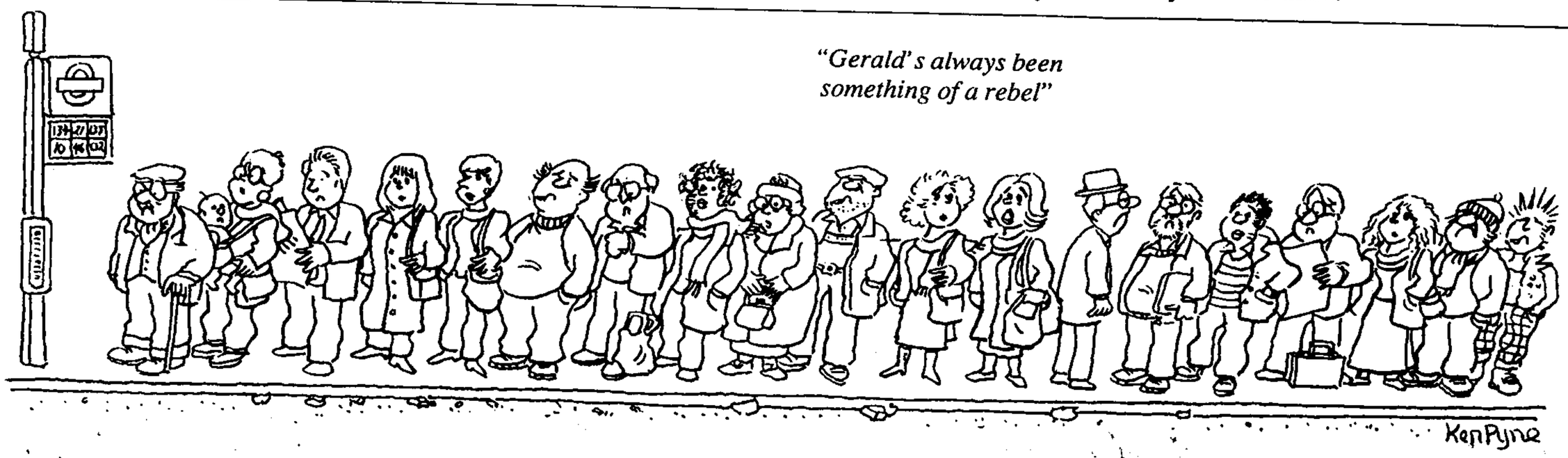
And what's it going to be about?

It's going to be about 200 pages long, big type, no pix, author's name — JULIE BURCHILL — in gold.

And it's going to be about what a serious writer I am — more serious than Morrisey and Kafka and Prince and Nietzsche and Princess Di put together!

So stuff you, pixie pratfaces Princes Harry and Wills — Burchill's gonna be bigger than the both of you — so there!

"Gerald's always been something of a rebel"



Literary Review

Sentenced to hard labia

Memories of the Ford Administration
John Updike
(Hamish Hamilton, £15.99)

WITH THE first chill winds of spring comes Updike time once more — the TV profiles, the interviews, the glittering critiques. What is it about John Updike?

No homegrown talent ever gets treated with half the respect accorded to this fey old sexagenarian from Massachusetts: the page-long encomia in the *TLS*, the frequent use of words like "fecundity" and "genius", and the pictures of the man himself, posed before the New England bracken and looking like a particularly zestful pixie.

English critics love Updike, mostly because he seems to possess the qualities English writers so conspicuously lack. Barnes, Amis junior and Ackroyd — Updike is a three-year foreign holiday compared to these cautious domestic package tours, a ski-run of glissando prose and wide-eyed saunters into the great unknown.

On the one hand he manages to pull off the rare feat of acting as a social registrar, making sense of recent American history in a partial but horrifyingly plausible way. On the other, he can do the language; that is, write in that alert, confidential and hyper-imaginative style for chapters on end. This is quite an achievement. After all, when a writer like Ian McEwan essays a stylistic flourish the crowd stops talking and holds its breath. We're not used to relaxed brilliance, which is why, perhaps, we tend to overvalue it when we see it.

Memories of the Ford Administration is a rather typical Updike novel, a conflation of past, near-present, linguistic skywriting and the sort of sod-you middlebrow vocabulary ("dyad", "chthonic", "gynous") that requires frequent trips to the dictionary. Similarly, Alfred Clayton, its reminiscent narrator, is a fair specimen of Updike man: a professional historian — the book purports to be a contribution to an academic symposium — obsessed with a figure from the remoter past (Buchanan, the last pre-civil war president), racked by dealings with wife, mistress and casual flings. Its themes might be summarised as the elusiveness of historical truth (*that* old one again), the frightfulness of bourgeois America under late capitalism, and, less immediately, female genitalia.

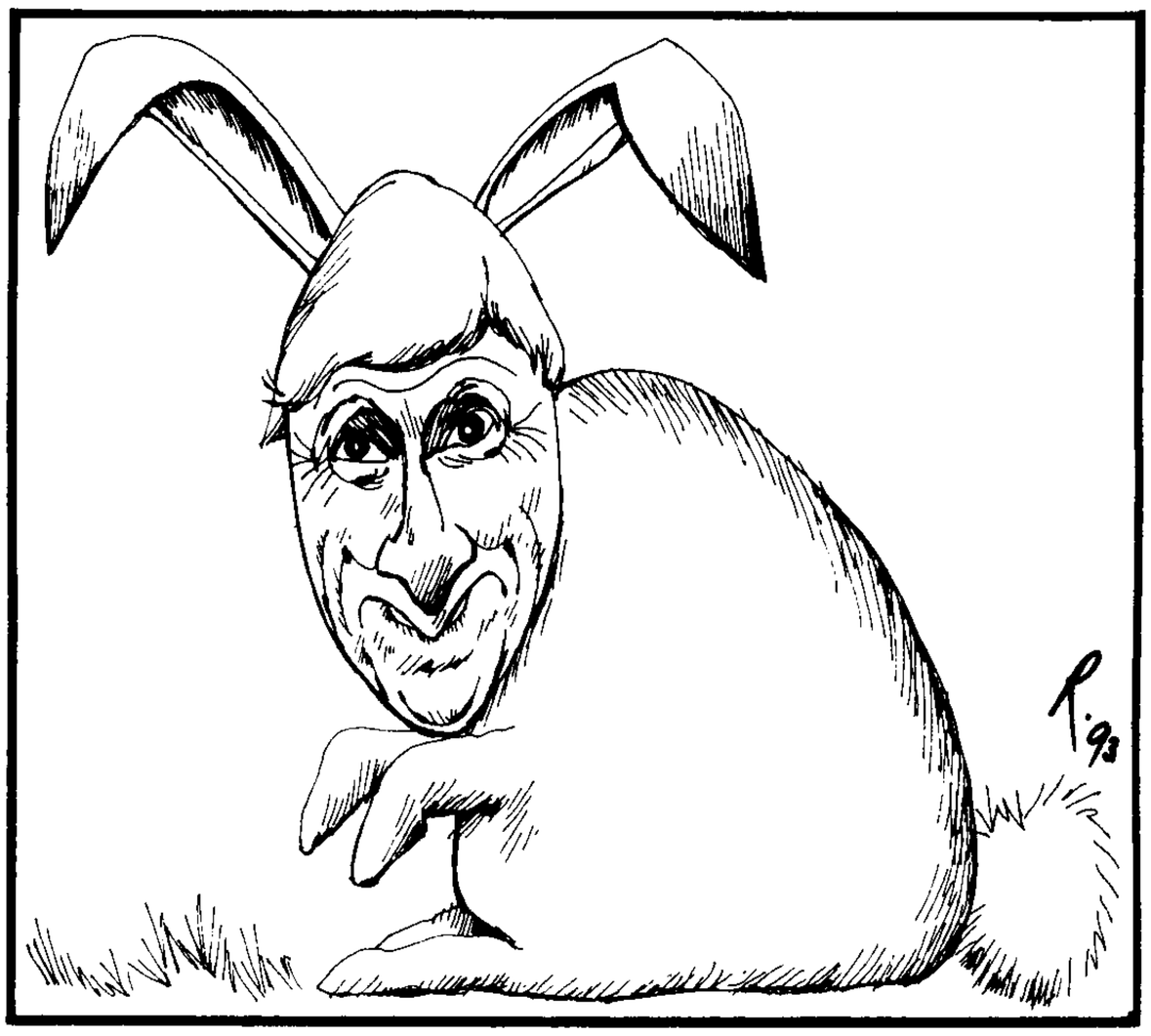
Updike's obsession with pudenda is well known. His interest in this spectral close of the modern novelist's mansion was made evident as long ago as 1974 in a lengthy poem entitled *Cunts*, in which he suggested that "we must assimilate cunts to our creed of beauty". Well, indeedy-doody we must, Mr U. Lead right on in there and close the corral gate after you, sir.

The present opus simply thrums with this kind of thing: references to that "puckering wave of flesh", elsewhere described as "oysterish" and "livid" — "the *frilly* look of it" Updike interjects at one point. Ever keen to locate sexual detail in a social context, he notes that "pussies were triangular in the Ford era, before high-sided swim suits compelled women to shave their groins of all but a vertical strip of natural adornment".

Gosh. Well, it makes a change from the endless drafts of Clayton's unpublished biography of Buchanan, which are frankly pretty tedious. There is also the question of the language. Whole tribes of respectable critics have gone on record to confirm that Updike is a linguistic master, a writer who — miraculously — can describe things as they actually are, and thereby isolate the wonderful uniqueness of objects, situations and people. In fact, all Updike's overblown and clever-clever style manages to do is to interpose itself between the reader and the thing it affects to portray.

Thus Clayton maintains that his domestic scandal "sat like a clammy great frog, smelling of the swamp of irrecoverable loss, in the bosom of our family". He describes the house he inhabits with his wife as "this hairy fringy nest she and I had together accumulated one twig at a time". Later the kitchen sink discloses "a shark's grin of washed silver".

In each case the reader, beckoned towards a revealing description, ends up further away — washed silver looks nothing like a shark's grin — and annoyed by the fact that all he is being asked to admire is Updike's OK-ness as a writer. Good prose, Orwell famously remarked, is like a window-pane. Updike's, though, is nearer to stained glass — full of light and colour and extremely pretty, but in the end only obscuring the variety of scene and incident beyond.



SNIPCOCK & TWEED
I WISH TO REGISTER A COMPLAINT ABOUT THIS HERE BOOK WHAT I PURCHASED NOT HALF AN HOUR AGO FROM THIS VERY BOUTIQUE...
BEAUTIFUL COVER...
JOHN CLEESE
LIFE
THE COVER DON'T ENTER INTO IT! THIS BOOK IS DEAD BORING! IT HAS CEASED TO BE ENTERTAINING! IT'S OF NO MORE INTEREST! BEREFT OF LIVELINESS IT RESTS UNOPENED! IT IS AN EXTREMELY DULL BOOK... ETC... ETC...
I QUITE UNDERSTAND, SIR. I'LL GET YOU ANOTHER ONE

Books & Bookmen

☐ *EVENING STANDARD editor Stewart Steven has angered his books editor, A.N. Wilson, by rearranging the layout of the books pages at the last minute.*

The reason for this eccentric interference was to give greater prominence to the review of a book by a gorgeous, pouting hackette (one of whose previous assignments, indeed, was to have her lips injected with collagen). Late on Wednesday 24 February, Steven came in to find that a review of The Taming of Eagles, by former Mail on Sunday hackette Imogen Edwards-Jones, had been placed on the third books page for the following day. Without consulting Wislon, who had left the office, he moved the review of Edwards-Jones's book into the main books spread, thus bumping a book review by Tory academic Lord Blake on to the third page.

The acknowledgements in Edwards-Jones's book, which is about the new Russia since the break-up of the Soviet Union, include a generous tribute to the avuncular Steven, but this pales alongside the generosity of the deal that Edwards-Jones received for doing the book. Steven persuaded publishers Weidenfeld and Nicolson to join the Mail on Sunday, of which he was then the editor, in paying Edwards-Jones a staggering six-figure sum, on the basis that the paper would serialise the book. Executives at the MoS were outraged by Steven's sweetheart deal and amazed when they saw a proof of the book — virtually every sentence had been rewritten by its editor. Steven's successor, Jonathan Holborow, did not want to run a single word, but eventually fulfilled his contractual obligation by burying an extract at the back of the newspaper, between the travel and city pages.

■ STUNNED bemusement in Bloomsbury at this year's Booker prize judges. Martyn Goff has failed to persuade a literary editor to read the 150-odd novels, and has instead hired Nicholas Clee, an eager young journalist on the *Bookseller*.

The other judges are hardly renowned for their commitment to contemporary fiction: biographer Anne Chisholm; English professor Gillian Beer and, as chairman, the all-purpose Earl of Gowrie. Oh, one more place. Let's have a Frenchman to celebrate the year of the single market: come in, Olivier Todd. Bingo! Another Booker jury...

☐ *WRITER'S MONTHLY* **is a practical magazine for aspiring and even practising authors owned by the same organisation as the Writing School which advertises on the front page of newspapers about "How to become a successful writer" and receive mouth-watering cheques.**

Not from *Writers' Monthly*, **you won't.**

Veteran Corgi editor and now freelance writer Michael Legat — also, ironically, author of *An Author's Guide to Publishing* **— was commissioned by editor Shirley Kelly to contribute three articles to the magazine, which he duly did and submitted his invoices for a modest £110 per article. Legat's increasingly importunate requests for payment were ignored, and he resorted to sending a mildly threatening letter to the proprietor of** *Writers' Monthly*, **Gayle Nathan. Months after publication, still no payment.**

The Society of Authors, bless 'em, then threatened legal proceedings. Legat has now received three cheques from Gayle Nathan.

'Bookworm'

NUCLEAR POWER

Brittan v. Britain

THE TRAGEDY that is United Kingdom energy "policy" — whereby British electricity consumers will continue to subsidise jobs in the *French* nuclear industry while our own coal mines close down — has turned to farce.

Although papers like the *Guardian* finally caught up with the story this week, it was revealed in detail in the *Eye* way back in January.

The absurdity now, however, is that Electricité de France, which if it were a British company would be hauled before the monopolies commission and broken into smaller units, is about to be awarded a new contract to sell us electricity and put 6,000 miners out of work — with the implicit support of two former cabinet colleagues: the hapless Leon Brittan, exiled to Brussels by Mrs Thatcher; and the hopeless Michael Heseltine, who was not exiled to Brussels but perhaps should have been.

As the *Eye* has said, French nuclear electricity, which has increased in price by 25 percent since the pound's devaluation, *can* be stopped — at least temporarily — by switching off the converter station Sellindge, near Folkestone, for maintenance. This may lead to litigation over contract commitments with the French; but that, after all, is what the law courts are for.

Such a move would not surprise the European Commission, which is used to having its views challenged; and it would accord with the attitude of Offer, the UK electricity regulator, to monopolies. More interestingly, it would find massive support from the text of a formal complaint about the unfair advantages enjoyed by EdF lodged by five Euro MPs and in the possession of *Private Eye*.

The formal *plainte* by members of the Green party in Germany, France, Belgium and Italy, was sat on by the European commission for six months before the commissioner concerned, Sir Leon, arrogantly declared that he had not even bothered to submit it to the French authorities before rejecting it.

The MEPs complained that EdF, a nationalised monopoly, had received direct subsidies from the French government and obtained major cuts in interest rates because its solvency was guaranteed by the French state. It charged abnormally low prices for the electricity it exported, which is known as "predatory pricing". Moreover, its nuclear reactors run on a more lax regime than those in other EC member states. This all gave EdF "artificial advantage" and permitted inflated development of the nuclear sector.

Between 1973 and 1982, official support for EdF amounted to 29.5 billion francs (at that time, £2,950 million) in the form of capital endowments and loans from the state fund for economic and social development (FDES). EdF also benefited from loans totalling 4.5 billion francs (£450 million) and enjoyed an interest rate of 7.2 percent compared with the going rate of 9.7-16.5 percent during the period 1972-84. This represented a total gain of 4-18 billion francs (£400-£1,800 million). Rightly, perhaps, the European parliament feels this is privileged treatment to the detriment of competitors.

The complaint also compares France's lax approach to safety and standards for discharge of nuclear effluent with those of other countries, and it reveals the number of stoppages ("a prudish term for breakdowns," say the Greens) per reactor is 0.4 in Japan, 2.1 in Britain, 2.5 in Germany, 4.6 in the U.S., and 66 in France. "These different examples indicate that EdF is not assuming its responsibilities and therefore the costs incurred in the matter of safety."

The absence of permits needed to build reactors, "the mere shadow of consultation of the inhabitants concerned", the advisory-only role of municipal and regional authorities, allow considerable reduction in construction time. In addition, EdF "flatters the cost of production" by under-estimating the cost of de-commissioning. It includes provisions only for entombment in concrete and not the total dismantling of irradiated equipment and of the core of the reactor and re-establishment of the environment as expected by the international atomic energy authority. Even then, the complaint says, the costs allowed for are much too low: only 15 percent of construction costs.

"Either these costs must be calculated in the framework of strict criteria and a real competition between enterprises, with complete and open truth about prices; or one must recognise the intrinsically inappropriate nature of nuclear power to the rules of the market and remove it from the competitive sphere."

The commission stared at the complaint for six months before Brittan replied with a 2,000-word document rejecting it. "Your arguments do not permit the conclusion of a violation by the French authorities of the EEC treaty. In the absence of new elements to elevate this complaint it will be filed, without any other consequence."

ENERGY

Just say *Non*!

WITH A DEATH sentence hanging over the British coal industry and the government's energy "policy" a shambles, is it sensible for consumers to continue to subsidise *France's* already heavily-subsidised nuclear-generated electricity industry?

In th[illegible]xt fortnig[illegible]rival tes[illegible] from

Private Eye 15th January 1993

SAUDI ARABIA

Just good friends

IN THE absence of an industrial policy, thousands of British jobs depend increasingly on the politically driven export contract, either part-financed by aid or through sales to one of our far wealthier Gulf allies.

Take British Aerospace, for example, the company which last month reported the biggest annual corporate loss in UK corporate history. Thousands more of its workers would be on the scrapheap were it not for the giant Al Yamamah project with Saudi Arabia, recently extended after a trip to the Gulf by John Major and his chief arms salesman, Jonathan Aitken.

Relying on the Saudis to bail out the creaking remnants of British industry has its drawbacks, however.

In the mid-80s they were quite prepared to threaten the British government over the continued existence of a small magazine operating out of London called *Sourakia*. In the run-up to the signing of the first Al Yamamah contract, the Saudis even threatened a trade embargo unless action was taken to stop the magazine that offended them.

One source has told the *Eye* that top Saudis made threats to Margaret Thatcher personally that something had to be done to stop the magazine smearing the reputations of some of the inner circle back home. They felt British-style justice seemed to be failing where Saudi-style justice would succeed.

In one message, conveyed to the foreign office and Mrs Thatcher in April 1986, Wafic Said, sometime representative of the Saudi royal family in London, stated that the government did not appear to be taking the problem of the magazine seriously.

The Saudi irritation followed a series of articles and allegations about Wafic Said, who later became a business partner of Jonathan Aitken at Aitken Hume and a friend of Mark and Mrs Thatcher. The allegations about Said, Aitken had naturally been assured, were "totally untrue".

Aitken had informed Douglas Hurd of the problem in 1984. He also told him that following a series of articles in that year, Said was asked to pay £30,000, and later £100,000, by the editor of the magazine to ensure kinder coverage or none at all in forthcoming issues (an interesting way to fund a magazine, and one which friends of the editor say he strenuously denies).

He said Wafic Said was well known in Britain and Saudi Arabia as a man of integrity, and that he had for many years acted as a *de facto* chief executive to the family of HRH Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz, the Saudi minister of defence. And, significantly, he told Mr Hurd that he believed Mr Said was more recently engaged in negotiating with the head of defence sales which would be of immense benefit to British exports (presumably this was a reference to the negotiations ahead of the signing of the Al Yamamah deal; a reference which is interesting given Said's remarks in a recent interview with *GQ* magazine that he was only involved in the civil side of the deal).

Wafic Said had already reported the matter of being allegedly asked for money to a superintendent at London's Vine Street police station, who had advised him to visit the magazine's editor while wired for sound. Aitken reported that Said was reluctant to take this action because he thought it would be deceitful and because he did not necessarily want the editor to be given a prison sentence for attempted blackmail.

The *Sourakia* affair remained on the agenda for at least two years. In May 1986 the Saudis told Richard Ryder, then PPS to the foreign secretary, that they were offended that nobody had come back to them since Prince Bandar's representations to Douglas Hurd and Mrs Thatcher about the magazine and that King Fahd himself was losing patience. They informed Ryder that Wafic Said had also commenced libel proceedings against *Sourakia* (last year he spent nearly two weeks in the high court to win libel damages from an old friend, Michael Baki, who had also written for the magazine).

Despite all these entreaties the British government, to its credit, consistently replied that the remedy for the situation was through the courts. Only Mrs Thatcher's personal interest and concern about the situation soothed the Saudis who eventually backed down from their threats.

ROAD v. RAIL

Motorway madness

THE government's intention to close large swathes of railway line may sound lunatic, but its plans to spend £20 billion on road improvements over the next 15 years are even more insane.

The map of those road "improvements" bears an uncanny resemblance to the map of the rail routes likely to close after privatisation. (The latter map was drawn by BR managers, who are after all in a good position to assess such things.)

A whopping great euroroute road is to be driven along the south coast from Dover to Penzance... while many of the railway lines on the same corridor are threatened with extinction.

Road upgrades are planned for Ipswich to Peterborough via Lowestoft and Norwich, precisely the routes where train services are fighting for survival. Huge road projects will allow even more vehicles to pound misery into the traffic-cursed West Midlands, with corresponding losses in the rail network.

Nearly every railway in Wales is likely to close, including the connections to the Irish ports, while beautiful euroroute roads are built to the very same ports — one road carving through the heart of the Snowdonia national park.

So much road expansion is planned to accommodate a doubling of road traffic by 2025. When this mortifying prediction was announced a few years ago, it seemed a switch in policy to encourage public transport would be the only solution. But the government, corrupted by its many friends in the road lobby, is having none of that and is working hard to turn the warning into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Brainwashed by road-lobby propaganda, the government believes that new roads are good for a region's economy — even though there is not a shred of evidence to support this view.

JUSTICE

The system is knackered

WHEN the police complaints authority (PCA) was formed in 1985, a few gullible idealists imagined it might do what it promised: provide an independent element in investigating complaints against the police, which had previously been done *entirely* by the police.

The illusion quickly died as the PCA, in a desperate effort to prove that it was not hostile to the police, abandoned all pretence at independence and provided the police with the perfect cover for continuing as before. Complaints submitted to the PCA are all investigated by the police, who are often from the same force as the officers against whom the complaint is made. The independent members of the committee "work with" police investigators — and uncannily almost always come to the same conclusions.

A fine example of this can be seen in the PCA's 1 March judgment in the case of Gary Mills and Tony Poole, convicted in 1990 of the murder of David Wiltshire.

Wiltshire was taken by ambulance, bruised and bleeding, from a house in Gloucester after a fight. The police, who wanted to interview Wiltshire about a complaint he had made against the London police, followed the ambulance to the hospital. When the injured man was — rather surprisingly — discharged, they took him to the police station. He died there, naked and still bleeding from his open wounds, a day and a half later.

Police then arrested Mills and Poole, who had been involved in the fight with Wiltshire, and charged them with murder. There were two independent witnesses to the fight: one woman who admitted she was high on speed; and Mr Neville Juke, who was the only person present not taking drugs, and who gave a very clear account of what happened.

He said the fight had been started by a crazed and drunken Wiltshire, who had attacked Mills and Poole. The two men, he said, protected themselves as best they could. Juke was quite specific in his long and lucid statement that Mills and Poole could not possibly be held responsible for the injuries to Wiltshire.

The prosecution did not give this statement to the defence, but told the defence Juke had been an eye-witness to the crime. They said they had a statement from him — but did not propose to call him at the trial. The defence were in a quandary. If they called Juke, they feared he might be cross-examined on his statement (which they could not see) to their clients' disadvantage.

The fantastic result was that Juke, the only witness not on drugs, did not appear at the trial. The judge complained. So did the jury. The prosecution gave no explanation. They relied on the evidence of the drugged woman, who was at any rate obliged to the police for a lenient view on other drugs charges, and on the evidence of another man who said he'd seen what happened in the room by peeping through half-closed curtains from outside. The prosecution said this witness had come forward "voluntarily" — a liberal interpretation given that he was in the custody of Gloucester police when he "came forward".

Thus without the main witness giving evidence, Mills and Poole were convicted of murder and sent down for life.

Since the case, a tape recording has come to light which the home office admits records a conversation between a Gloucester police officer, Detective Inspector Gladding, and Juke. In the conversation, Gladding clearly warns Juke that he is not to come to court during the committal hearing. Juke insists he wants to give evidence since he was the only person who properly saw what happened. But the inspector is adamant he should stay away.

Juke left the country, but has since returned and continues to insist a gross injustice has been committed. A Harlech TV programme last month pointed to several absurdities in the case, played the Gladding tape and quoted the misgivings of the not entirely subversive Tory MP for Gloucester, Douglas French QC.

The crown prosecution service, as usual, said there would be no criminal charges of anyone involved in the prosecution. The Gloucester police said, as usual, that there would be no disciplinary charges. So everyone was looking forward to the results of a six-month inquiry into the case by the police complaints authority, which had appointed the Thames Valley police to investigate their Gloucestershire neighbours. The independent member of the PCA overlooking the case was one Beryl Wallis, a former senior personnel manager from IBM. (Coincidence corner: the chairman of the PCA, Sir Leonard Peach, is a former director of personnel and corporate affairs at IBM.)

How does the PCA deal with crucial subjects such as the non-disclosure to the defence of a vital witness statement, the conversation between Juke and Gladding and the non-appearance at the trial of a witness whose evidence was crucial to understanding the crime? The report reads as follows:

"With the exception of one witness statement, all statements were disclosed by the CPS to the defence..." Well, yes; but that was the most important witness statement of all.

"...in accordance with accepted legal practice." Well, yes; but doesn't that make accepted legal practice absurd and unfair?

"It is clear to the authority that neither prosecution nor defence required that particular witness in court." Well, yes; but what about the interests of justice? Did they require that the jury should hear the most important witness?

"Neither is there any evidence to suggest that this witness was threatened during conversation with a detective investigating the murder." Well, yes; but what about the ethics of a detective telling a potential witness to stay away from court?

As so often, the PCA concludes that absolutely nothing wrong of any kind could be discovered in the Mills/Poole case and that defence, prosecution and courts had behaved absolutely magnificently from start to finish.

Two obviously innocent men are locked up for life, but nothing (as far as the PCA is concerned) should be done about it.

POLICE 5

Stoking the ire...

THERE must have been sighs of relief last week at Stoke Newington nick, north London, when two men were arrested by the anti-terrorist branch and a big arms cache was found in the area. At last you could say "Stoke Newington police" without immediately thinking of Operation Jackpot, the long-running inquiry into police corruption.

But just as the anti-terrorist boys sprang into action, four people arrested in separate incidents by Stoke Newington police over the last four years were having their convictions quashed by the lord chief justice at the court of appeal, on the grounds that some of the officers in their case could not be regarded as "witnesses of truth".

For the second time in a month, TV cameras outside the high court focused on people attacking the honesty of the Stokey police.

There is a new chief at the station now, Niall Mulvihill, a superintendent regarded as media-smart by his superiors. The message from Niall after the latest setback seemed to be that all that was necessary was to put this unfortunate incident behind them and win back the trust of the local population.

Alas for Niall. All four of those cleared have indicated that they might consider civil actions for wrongful arrest. Ida Oderinde, Rennie Kingsley, Dennis Tulloch and Everard Brown were less than happy that no hint of apology seems to have slipped out of the station.

The two men cleared earlier last month of a manslaughter conviction resulting from a SN investigation, James Blake and Francis Hart, are also considering their positions. The Met police's record on civil actions is not a happy one — they paid out more than £600,000 for damages claims over false imprisonment, assault and wrongful arrest last year.

More worrying for the station are the lurking cases which have yet to come to court or appeal, and the grim total of failure that has sprung from the activities of its officers and the collapse in public confidence: there have been some 76 drugs cases since 1988 where there are deep doubts, reckon the Hackney Community Defence Association. Of these, the crown prosecution service (CPS) has thrown in the sponge on no fewer than 17; 17 have resulted in acquittals — the juries at Snaresbrook crown court now have their own views about the reliability of Stokey cases. Six cases are awaiting appeal and 12 civil actions are either underway or being considered. It looks like there are going to be Jackpots of rotten apples running on till at least this time next year.

Only one officer, former detective constable Roy Lewandwoski, has been charged so far. He is doing 18 months for stealing from the home of a manslaughter victim and was cleared on a VAT charge. Three others, Bruce Galbraith, Barry Lyons and Ronald Palumbo, have been suspended. Reports about others are with the DPP.

Lewandwoski is seen as holding the key to what has been going on at the station. Could it now be that he will feel like co-operating with the corruption inquiry? He has smartened up since he was a long-haired wide boy zooming round Hackney in his denims. At court before he was weighed off he was all blazer-and-paisley-tie. If he were now to make a clean breast of it all, senior officers at Stoke Newington might not be able to continue with their relentless line that it was all down to naughty Roy and has just been whipped up by the local lefties and their chums in the legal and media worlds.

ON THE BUSES

Ding, dingbat!

BUS privatisation in London may be a disaster waiting to happen, but the current protest campaign of leaflets and threatened strikes by bus drivers and conductors is unlikely to help matters.

Any stoppages will be seized on by London Bus managers as further excuse for their already shoddy performance; while the leaflets given to passengers explaining why deregulation and privatisation won't work seem to miss the point.

Rightly they point to deregulation disasters in cities such as Manchester, claiming a 25 percent drop in punters, vastly increased fares and reduced services when private operators were introduced there. But they forget that the incumbent operator, Greater Manchester Buses (GMB), was allowed to flood routes, pack stops with their own vehicles and confuse the public as to when and where their buses were going. And the unions also omit to say that GMB is, for the moment anyway, owned by Manchester itself.

In London, senior managers of the ten major LB subsidiaries have embarked on a policy of macho management: issuing terse new contracts for drivers and platform staff offering sums of up to £4,000 in return for cuts of up to £48 per week on wages, plus an extra five hours' work. "Take it or leave" is the attitude, as the loss of grants covering uneconomic and socially necessary routes is cited. Come April, this could turn the balance sheets of even those odd profit-making subsidiaries as red as their buses.

So the customary "fattening up" for privatisation is here a slimming down. Economically London Buses is doomed: with old vehicles and no property to "liberate" (the rumour is that the government will attach covenants to its prime sites, to ensure no change of use for 20 years) it cannot hope to compete with cheap and cheerful tenders of operators waiting in the wings.

Many of this latter group have only out-of-town overheads, no cost-consuming garages to maintain, and can lease newer, more reliable buses. Routes will be going for a song. But with confusion over what will happen to Travelcard and the wider system of subsidies, commuters who live and work on uneconomic but socially necessary bus routes are unlikely to be singing.

In the City

FORMER Polly Peck chairman Asil Nadir is due to make a return visit to the inspector this week following their surprise meeting last November. Then his arrest and release on police bail followed new inquiries by Scotland Yard, as distinct from the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), into allegations unrelated to the theft charges on which he faces a trial currently set for September.

Insiders are not convinced that either the new Yard investigation or the further inquiries by the SFO into asset disposals following Polly Peck's collapse and Nadir's bankruptcy will result in any further action being taken.

Meanwhile there are increasing whispers at the Polly Peck trial itself may be less than a firm fixture.

Such speculation has been encouraged by suggestions that Nadir's able brief, Anthony Scrivener QC, may sign up to defend Nazmu Virani in the biggest of the BCCI trials. The Virani trial is also expected to go in September. Both trials are likely to be of the usual months-not-weeks variety, which could create a problem if Scrivener is to act for Virani and still act for Nadir.

There are also murmurs about the state of Nadir's health, which could be a factor in the timing of the trial — if indeed it takes place.

AT THE SFO, the inquest into the Thomas Ward acquittal continues. But one issue unlikely to be addressed is the initial mistake in opting for several trials instead of one omnibus showdown featuring all the Guinness players.

That decision was taken at an early stage, despite the objections of the police by prosecutors John Chadwick and Barbara Mills, and her predecessor as SFO director, John Wood. Ironically the preference for separate trials was also shared by all the defendants except Ernest Saunders. He too wanted his advisers and share supporters in the dock with him. Both Scotland Yard and Saunders believe that only then would the jury see the totality of what had gone down with Guinness during the Distillers bid battle and who was a star and who had a walk-on part.

Saunders lost his chance when the trial judge, Mr Justice Henry, was told one trial would last a year. This the judge decided was too burdensome for a jury. So on we went to Guinness I, II, III and IV.

Whether there would have been a different result if there had been just one trial cannot be known. But together the three trials — the case against Cazenove's David Mayhew never made it to trial because Barbara Mills, just before exiting to become director of public prosecutions, used the supposed emergence of new evidence to bottle out — lasted almost a year. However, they took three years to resolve at a cost exceeding £20 million. Not so burdensome for the juries, perhaps, but very trying for the taxpayer who ended up with the bills for the aborted trials of Mayhew, Morgan Grenfell's Roger Seelig and Henry Ansbacher's Lord Spens, plus Ward.

Now the taxpayer can look forward to another episode in the Guinness fiasco: appeals from Gerald Ronson and Tony Parnes against their convictions with Saunders in 1990 on the grounds that evidence of six share support operations involving indemnities against loss given by Ansbacher to TWH, a London-based client which acted for Arab investors, between 1985-86 were withheld by the SFO.

These deals, say the Ronson/Parnes camp, show that share support was "common and accepted" in the City. Why they should claim ignorance of these deals is less than clear. The activities of Ansbacher and TWH in two of the six deals were detailed in October 1987 (*Eye* 675), more than two years before Guinness I started.

Given how the court of appeal fell for Saunders's Alzheimer line, it would be no surprise if the convictions of Ronson and Parnes, only ever minor if very well paid players, were overturned, leaving Saunders (who is appealing to Europe) and Jack Lyons (who is, as always, not appealing) on the sheet. It already seems as if the City scandal of the century was all a dreadful mistake, if not a mirage.

SUNDAY TIMES City editor Jeff Randall's almost hysterical outburst (28 February) accusing Labour peer Lord Hollick of deceiving him over events inside the Mirror Group Newspapers boardroom may owe as much to internal Wapping politics as to Randall reporting that chief executive David Montgomery had been "flapped down" by the *Mirror* directors only to see "Monty" obtain a vote of confidence from MGN.

The Wapping word for some time has been that Randall, booster of such fallen stars as Philip Green, George Walker and Roger Levitt (given a helpful puff on 7 March over only now facing one fraud charge!), has been under pressure from business editor Ivan Fallon. The anti-Montgomery piece went in despite "Monty" appealing to Fallon who is something of an admirer. The MGN directors' decision to back "Monty" against the isolated Hollick therefore did not exactly help Randall. Perhaps denouncing a Labour peer may have helped redress the balance.

IT SEEMS THAT not every *Independent* reader is as impressed as editor Andreas Whittam Smith and business editor Christopher Huhne with their new star columnist, "Changi Jim" Slater.

Indeed, many have written to protest at such a respectable newspaper hosting a convicted company law breaker on its City pages. How many more might write when they learn that the millionaire is receiving up to an estimated £500 per article?

Nervousness can already be detected at the *Independent* over getting so close to the tainted tipster. After only three weeks it was felt necessary to reword the mild investor's health warning which appears at the end of each Slater column. Following the last *Eye* questioning the restrictions imposed on Slater dealing in shares he recommends, *Independent* readers can now be reassured to know that from 25 February "Mr Slater has agreed not to deal in a share within six weeks *before and after* any mention". Previously, he had merely agreed "not to deal in a share within six weeks". Nice try guys, but the fox is already inside the coup.

But just how good a tipster is the "legendary stock market guru" — his own description accepted by the not so *Independent*? We all, including the saintly Whittam Strobes, know that guru Slater failed to predict the collapse of Slater Walker in 1975. But what about since then?

From the early 80s Slater has been an active trader through a number of private companies he controlled. An early example was the somewhat inaccurately named Optimistic. In its first year, 1980-81, Optimistic made a profit of £94,000 from selling shares worth £1.17 million. The next year it lost £1,900 on £234,000 and stopped trading.

Brenroyd had a longer but hardly more successful career. For the year to September 1983 it made £229,000. Further profits of £35,000 and £204,000 followed. But for 1986 and 1987, a period when the market boomed ahead of Black Monday, the company lost money — £41,000 and £72,000. Slater failed to forecast either setback, expecting "considerable improvement" for 1987. He forecast "some improvement" for 1988. Quite right, Brenroyd made a smaller loss — £29,000. The "improvement" for 1989 turned out to be £2,000 profit. A further "improvement" was forecast for 1990. Instead, there was a £51,000 loss and the company ceased trading.

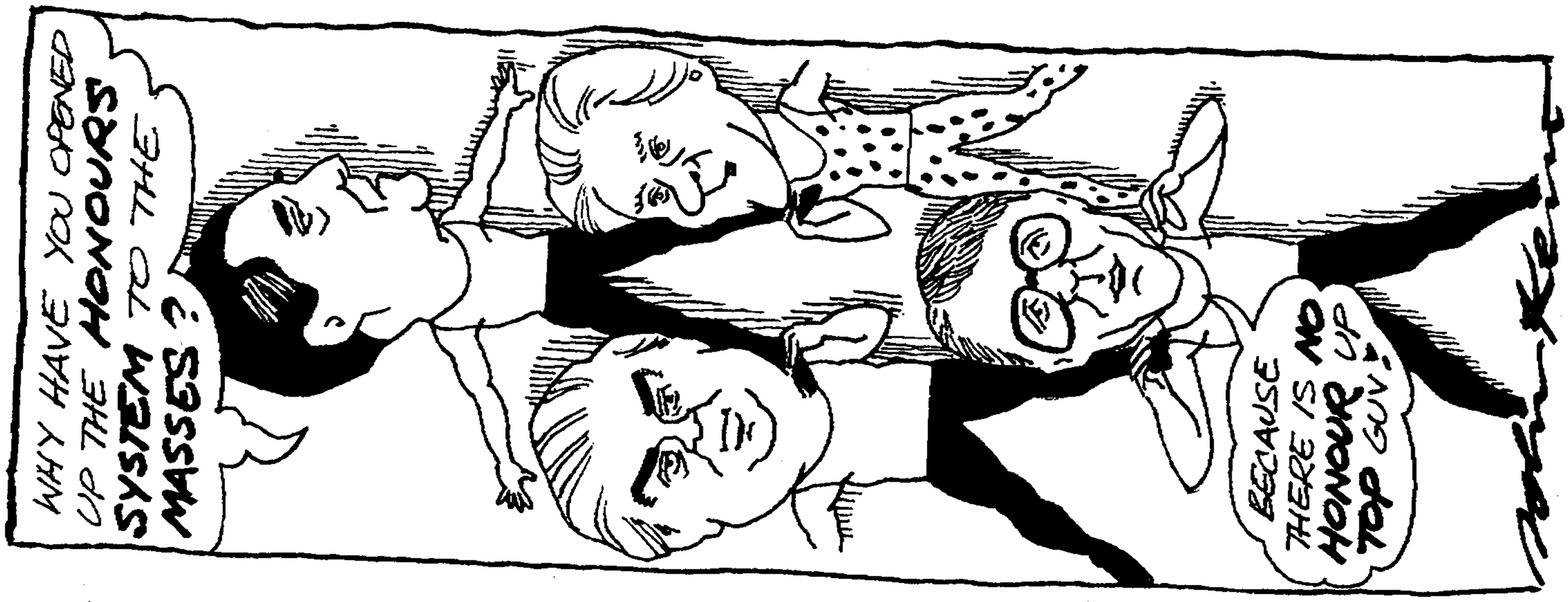
Midblend is another Slater share and commodity trader. Since 1985 it has made profits in only three of six years. These total just £19,000 against losses, mainly in the two most recent years, 1990 and 1991, of £16,000.

Inzone is another dent in the guru. In three years from 1988 it never made a profit, losing £180,000 before it too ceased trading.

Even the ever generous Slater Foundation has failed to benefit from his supposed "legendary" share-picking powers. It has made profits on investments of £78,000 between 1987 and 1990, but that was more than cancelled out by a loss of £98,000 for 1991.

As diligent truth seekers, no doubt the *Independent* knew all about this Slater track record before so proudly promoting him as a "guru"? It may not disturb such protectors of the public wealth as Whittam Smith and Huhne, but it should make *Independent* readers think more than twice before following Slater's advice.

'Slicker'



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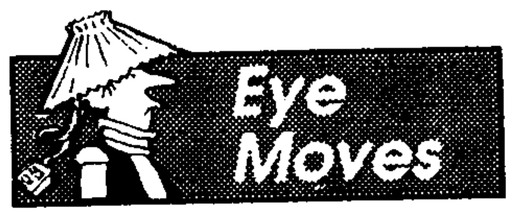

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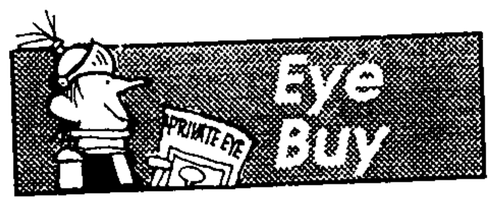

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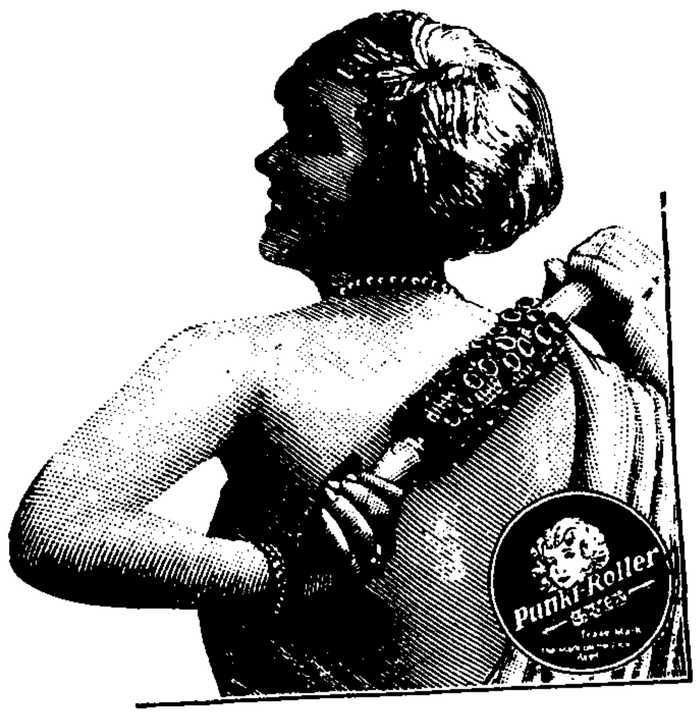

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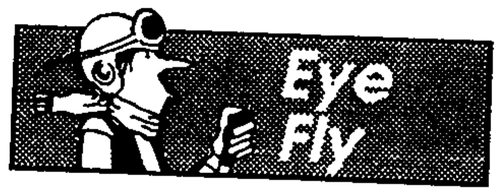

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INVESTMENT BANKER, 26, gentle, considerate, seeks affectionate lady, librarian type, London, Surrey. Romantic nights out a start. Box 6714.

FUGLY-M (29) seeks Fugly-F. Box 6814.

TWO WEEK HOLIDAY in Portugal, June, for attractive and discreet companion to solvent sexy divorcee, mid-30s. Meet for dinner anywhere. Box 6914.

PROFESSIONAL MAN 20s seeks intelligent woman into books/politics for boozy meals out, theatre and whatever. S. Wales. Box 7014.

NICE BLOKE mid twenties seeks nice girl for nice times. Nice letter please. Cambs. Box 7114.

SINGLE ATTRACTIVE female, 36, with SoH requires similar male. Midlands. Box 7214.

ATTRACTIVE SINGLE male, tall, slim, 42, seeks romantic female. Box 7314.

EXPATRIATE (28) seeks bright attractive outdoor n/s 20s female for correspondence and whatever develops. Box 3514.

ELIGIBLE BACHELOR, 31, tall, strong, handsome, kind, wealthy and humorous, seeks pretty blonde well-educated girlfriend, 18-24 (please send photo). London. Box 2614.

MODEL WITH BRAINS (or similar) wanted by successful single London lawyer, 38, who aims high in life. Photo and telephone number appreciated. Box 3814.

OXON FEMALE 26 seeks single witty warm hearted man who enjoys walking, talking, travel and Red Dwarf. Box 8214.

QUIS FEMINAM maturam sed formosam, jocosam, jucundam, prope Glevum languescentem, mente et anima tacite stimulare potest? Box 8314.

SATISFY MY satyriasis! Slim, blond man, cultured, friendly and independent, seeks nymph (18-45), any nationality, for uncomplicated passion. Central London. Box 8414.

MUSIC IS THE FOOD of love! Opera lover (female fortyish) seeks male companion to share music, good food, friendship. Box 8114.

SUFFOLK MAN, tasty 43, in bland marriage, seeks spicy affair — anywhere. Box 7914.

I THINK I'M attractive, fun-loving and gregarious. My friends think I'm a total incompetent. I'm 40, surprisingly single and would like better friends — preferably male. Photo appreciated. Box 8014.

PHYSICIAN 30, 6FT, athletic and adventurous seeks affectionate, elegant, intelligent lady to share good times. I like good food, wine, music, theatre and travel. Photo with letter please. London area. Box 6114.

MALE, 40s, STRONG, sensitive, professional, routinely married, seeks exhiliration with (similarly-placed?) female, age immaterial. Box 6214.

COMPANY CHAIRMAN (50) would like to meet lady for friendship. Absolute discretion assured. Write Box 9815.

LA DOLCE VITA. English businessman, 39 years old, sporting workaholic living in Italy, seeks mother tongue companionship, home or abroad, with attractive, intelligent woman loving good food and the arts. Box 9915.

BORED BEYOND belief, male, 35, tall, professional, seeking intelligent independent woman. Lincs/E. Midlands. Box 10015.

NEITHER FALSE modesty nor bravado: unattached professional man, 30, goodlooking, fit, vulnerable, caring, seeks female counterpart, 25-30yo. London/S.Mids area. Box 10115.

PROFESSIONAL GENT — tall handsome non-smoker, 40, romantic, good humoured, kind, gentle, seeks special lady. Photo appreciated. London/East Anglia. Box 10215.

STILL SLIM FIT and not so bad looking lawyer (36) attached, great company, seeks attractive lady 18-28 to spoil and pamper with champagne lunches and erotic afternoons. (Yorks). Box 11615.

VIVACIOUS CAREER girl, 45, has vacancy for wealthy Chippendale lookalike but would settle for less. London/SE. Unattached applicants only. CV to Box 11715.

WONDERING LOST SOUL seeks kind/caring female to share journey on life's rollercoaster. Box 11815.

HAPPY ATTRACTIVE Hampshire girl, 34, dental hygienist, seeks romantic dentist (? similar single professional) n/s with similar oral skills and manual dexterity. Box 11915.

EXUBERANT, VIVACIOUS auburn haired, blue eyed female (27) seeks humorous solvent professional (under 37) for helpless laughter. Box 12015.

PARADISE? COASTAL Cork. Widower 61 needs younger woman, intelligent, no ties, help make garden etc. Small farmhouse, land. Freedom, sharing expenses. Car necessary. Box 12115.

MY IDEAL MAN would be a 5'10", lean, dark haired, smouldering eyed film director with success and enjoyment of life equally proportioned. Caring, intelligent, sensual and affectionate, into art exhibitions, yet still able to enjoy rock'n'roll. But I will accept a close approximation — or will I? I, of course, am an amazing, wonderful lady who always expects the best in life. Box 12215.

MORT (30) SEEKS Ysabell (25-35). NW. Box 11515.

TALL HANDSOME intelligent man, 25, seeks stylish sensual (older?) lady for mutual pleasure. Box 12315.

MALE, 26, INTELLECTUAL single, leftish, SoH, London, seeks female for lighthearted evenings. Box 12415.

BRIGHT, SINGLE university lecturer, 27, OK looking, kind, romantic, distressed by recent break-up, requires a fun-loving, attractive woman to sort him out. London area. Photo & telephone number appreciated. Box 12515.

GRADUATE (25) SEEKS Miss or Mrs R for occasional extra tutorials. London or SE. No Sharons. Photo and phone to Box 12615.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL male, young 40, married but missing excitement in life, wishes to meet interesting and vivacious lady for stimulating conversation, candlelit dinners and discreet but passionate affair. London area. Box 9315.

NO BULLSHIT! Good looking intelligent male 36 n/s seeks slim, horny girlfriend 21+. Risque replies welcome. Manchester. Box 9415.

GLASGOW BASED male postgrad, 24, seeks female. Droll, shortish, arty optimist preferred, though more than willing to be surprised. Box 9515.

CHEERFULLY ATTRACTIVE blonde (35). Own company, transport, cat and flat (W. London), seeks Alan Rickman or Jack Nicholson. Ranks wit and intelligence over brawn and braces. Recent photo essential (no retouching). Habitual respondents, callow youths, OAPs and married men need not apply. Box 9615.

MALE, ATTRACTIVE, caring, affluent, virile, seeks sensuous female for evenings out and holidays. London resident. Box 9715.

WALKING THROUGH autumn leaves, candlelight dinners, intellectual conversation, romance and a loving relationship wanted by a professional single businesswoman early 40s with an unattached stylish successful warm mature non-smoking man around 40. I live in London and am seekingt a serious mature relationship. Box 5915.

BUBBLY ADVENTURESS wanted for East European adventure in June with tall good-looking professional man (45). Tel/Fax 0272-467535.

HANDSOME GRADUATE company director (solvent, 28) seeks intelligent attractive female, 20-30ish with sexy figure, good legs, for passionate liaisons and fun (perhaps more?). London/SE. Photo and phone. Box 6015.

SEXY INTELLIGENT playmate (f) 20-30ish sought for Apres-Ski tumbles in US, March/April. Not a freebie! Ski-pole etc. inspection — London. Photo, phone. Box 6115.

MUCKY MAN SEEKS flamboyant floozie for outrageous adventures. Location optional. Knickers not. Box 10315.

COMPANY CHAIRMAN craves lively lady for lingering lunches. London. Box 10415.

WOMAN 20-40? Confident, attractive, affectionate? Gentleman, 34, humorous, youthful good looks, challenges you: put pen to paper! Box 10515.

EROGENOUS BLONDE, 20s, desires youngish lothario. Photos. Box 10615.

AGEING ADOLESCENT male, tennis and golfer (45) needs someone to court — when not on court or course, of course. Box 11115.

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT female seeks humorous, single male, 30-40, who never normally answers advertisements. Interests cinema, restaurants, France. Photo preferred. Box 11215.

ATTRACTIVE, SUCCESSFUL male, 30, excellent company, seeks romance. The catch? I value honesty and love. Do you? (London/SE). Box 11315.

PROLIX MALE, 20s, seeks sexy bint. Photos. Box 10715.

EXPERIENCE THE JOYS of spring! Sexy, slim, single London-based professional, 40, seks attractive, upmarket married lady for discreet frolics. Go on, spoil yourself! Box 10815.

GOOD HOME MAKER seeks good home provider. I am 55, attractive. You must be honest, affluent and mature. ALA. Anywhere, can travel. Box 10915.

PROUST-LOVING 30ISH girl, tall, stylish, journalist but nice anyway, seeks similar male, London. Box 11015.

GERMAN, EXECUTIVE position, late forties, sporty touch (ski, tennis, jogging), frequent visitor to UK, married but lonely, seeks educated female for deep profound relationship. Box 11415.

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WARM ATTRACTIVE intelligent professional woman mid-30s looking for fun, romance, serious relationship and ready-made family. Currently London-based but country loving as well. Box 7415.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE. Stunning blonde, professional, 30, seeks tall, handsome, interesting, successful, humorous man 30-40. No time wasters. Box 7515.

SENSITIVE, TALL, fortyish bearded graphic designer/writer; interests pubs, cinema, boating; seeks short, brunette, arty, angelic, funny, beguiling, leftish, intelligent, independent, wanton younger woman for life enhancing relationship. Photo appreciated. North London. Box 7615.

MALE 34, TALL, slim, reserved, moderately intelligent, enjoys travel, drinking, sailing, etc. seeking self sufficient female for fun. Box 7715.

TALL ATTRACTIVE blonde seeks tall attractive man, 35-45, to brighten 1993. South West. No Tories please! Box 7815.

YESTERDAY HAS GONE — share tomorrow with me. Lady, 40, goodlooking, intelligent, spontaneous, vibrant, seeks her permanent consort. Will relocate. Box 7915.

SUCCESSFUL MUSIC business entrepreneur (London) seeks warm, understanding female as friend and occasional confidential assistant. Photo, plus phone number or SAE please. Box 8015.

INDIAN BUSINESSMAN early 40s seeks slim/average lady for uncomplicated liaison, any nationality, ALA — discretion required/assured. Box 8115.

PRETTY VIVACIOUS woman seeks happy hero aged 28-40. Box 8215.

VIRILE MIDDLE-AGED married man seriously seeks sugar mummy, ideally West Country/London. Box 8315.

THIRTY AND FLIRTY but in reality this Rowena still seeks her Ivanhoe. Can you come to the rescue? Box 8415.

ATTRACTIVE MALE (25) seeks sensual, uninhibited female for occasional passionate trysts. Discretion assured if preferred. South. Box 8515.

GRADUATE SCIENCE student (23), Cambridge-based seeks intelligent, affectionate woman. Box 9215.

MID WEEK FUN. Tall, good looking late thirties Bristol man seeks attractive woman to be thoroughly spoilt. If you would like to share some exciting times with me then please write to me with your phone number to Box 7215.

60+ MAN? Warm caring attractive woman seeks mutual enhancement life's pleasures/comfort against its woes. London/Oxford. Box 7315.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL male, 20, hopelessly adores older women, open to offers. Red hair secures! South Warwickshire. Box 6215.

TALL, VERY ATTRACTIVE girl, 29, equally at home in Land Rover/XJS, seeks similar soulmate. Notts/Lincs. Letter, photo. Box 6315.

LADY 53 WISHES to meet gentleman to share country living. Hampshire. Box 6415.

UPMARKET MARRIED man, fit and 40, seeks attractive intelligent lady for sensual friendship. South/Southwest. Box 6515.

GOOD LOOKING businessman, 40, with outgoing personality, seeks classy lady for discreet fun. South/Southwest. Box 6615.

MARRIED MAN not unattractive, 40, looking for fun lady for occasional discreet liaisons. Photo please. Bucks. Box 6715.

KINKY WOMEN read on: maybe your fantasies require willing, intelligent, presentable, discreet young man (25)? Photo, fantasy, phone. Box 6815.

NUBILE PETITE effervelоquent thirty-something seeks brainy hunk (Yorkshire?). Photo essential! Box 6915.

LADYFRIEND REQUIRED by tall fit and attractive professional male, early 40s, for discreet daytime liaisons. Photo please, mine by return. Northern England. Box 7015.

FAIR FAT FORTY forsaken female fearing forlorn future foraging for friendly fancy-free fellow, New Forest area. Non-smoker feel free to write to me. Box 7115.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL man (53) Gemini, seeks slim sensuous cultured woman for discreet daytime liaisons. Oxfordshire. Box 5415.

PETITE PROFESSIONAL woman seeks charismatic male 28+, North East. Box 5515.

GEMINI MALE, 48, superfit, own hair, teeth and joie de vivre, single again in Central London, seeks female 30-45 to share life, art, music, food and laughs. Box 5615.

FRENCH LADY sought by male. Someone who can help me start a business in France. I have various interests, specially music. Box 5715.

LIVELY FEMALE, 30, intelligent, sense of humour, seeks chap under 30 — must be tall, slim, educated, sporting type. Oxford area. Photo appreciated. Box 5815.

LIVELY, INTELLIGENT, warm, attractive woman (based NW), 32, seeks reliable but fun professional male. Photo appreciated. Box 9115.

I (35) NEED female 25-40. Friendship, dalliance. No ties. London. Photo please. Box 3515.

SEXUALLY DEPRIVED professional male, fiftyish, attractive, slim, fit, warm, affectionate and fun to be with, but with vestigial sense of marital loyalty, seeks attractive woman similarly placed (or not) for romantic dinners and discreet sexual encounters. West Yorks/anywhere. Box 3615.

PRETTY, UNPRETENTIOUS, blond woman, 46, seeks stress-free friendship with kind, exciting man, London/Bedfordshire. Box 3715.

TALL TRAVELLED Taurean 53 seeks married lady for mutual whingeing and wining. West London. Box 3815.

YORKSHIRE BRIAR wants to be entangled with rampant honeysuckle. Box 3915.

ELEGANT PROFESSIONAL man, free spirit, 37, and loves kids, wants to gel with untamed, centred, slim, self loving woman. London area. Box 4315.

IF YOU ARE a female with a healthy mind and can write letters which reveal your exceptional qualities then do drop me a line. A most entertaining correspondence with a 26 year old will follow. Box 4615.

VIRGIN MALE (21) likes tuition from a kind lady. Oxford. Box 4815.

HIGH FLYER. Erratic professional (36), handsome, worldly and witty with excellent credentials seeks cultivated beauty (23-32) "ish" for special romance. Photo and phone please. Box 9015.

YOU MUST BE out there somewhere!! My daughter says there's no such man. How about showing you exist? You are 30 to 40, tall, good-looking, professional, well educated, music lover, n/s, moderate drinker, unattached with a sense of humour and looking for the magic lady. She is 35, tall, slim, beautiful, highly intelligent, well educated, well read, well travelled, n/s, unattached, moderate drinker, sense of humour. Likes skiing, Shakespeare, music, and is looking for the magic man to settle down with and be happy. London or home counties. Box 8615.

WEST YORKSHIRE. Tart wanted o.n.o., with short skirt and high heels, for laughs and lust by lively 50s unattached male with GSoH. No objection to cellulite, wrinkles or stretch marks!!! Closet tart acceptable. Age/status immaterial. Saucy letter from non-smoking exhibitionist appreciated for starters, photo a bonus. Make my day... Box 8715.

SCOTLAND — VERY attractive, stylish adventuress seeks sporty handsomish man (38-48). Must be fun and geographically compatible! Photo/150 words guarantees reply. Box 8815.

EXCEPTIONALLY NICE woman (so she's told) 42, with good looks, warmth, intelligence, style, wicked SoH and no hang-ups! Seeks tall good-looking male counterpart (48) for friendship/cuddles/laughter/more? Photo please (returned). Thames Valley. Box 8915.

HANDSOME AMUSING tall upper-class chappie, 35, with PHD, seeks beautiful girl with brains, red nails and a XXX like a peach. Box 4015.

LAWYER, SLIM, handsome, 41, married, seeks affair with special married lady 30-40. London. Box 4115.

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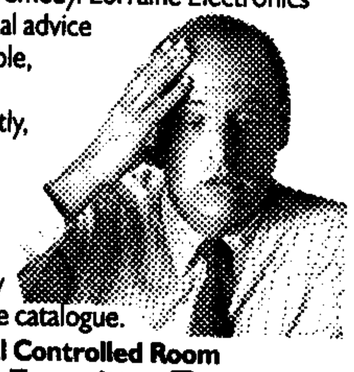

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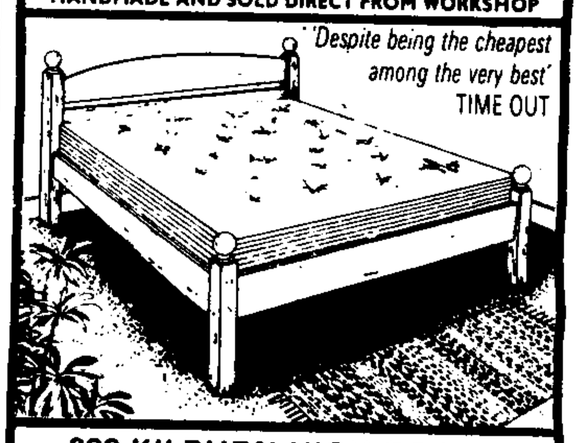

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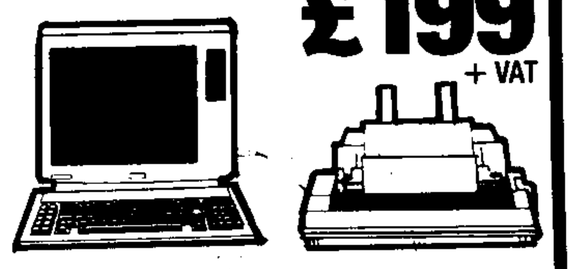

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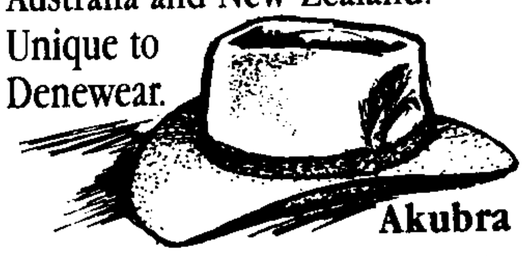

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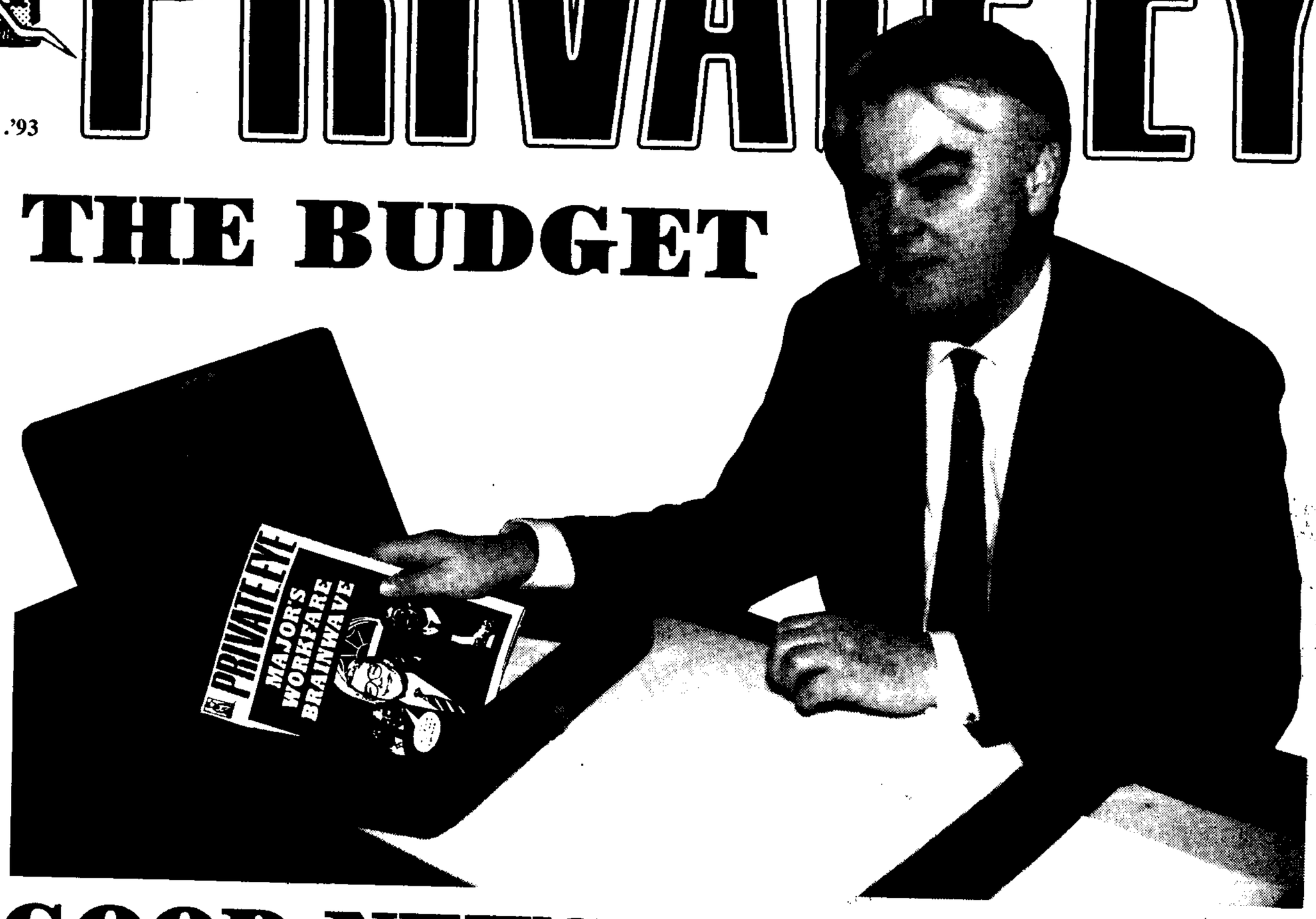

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